



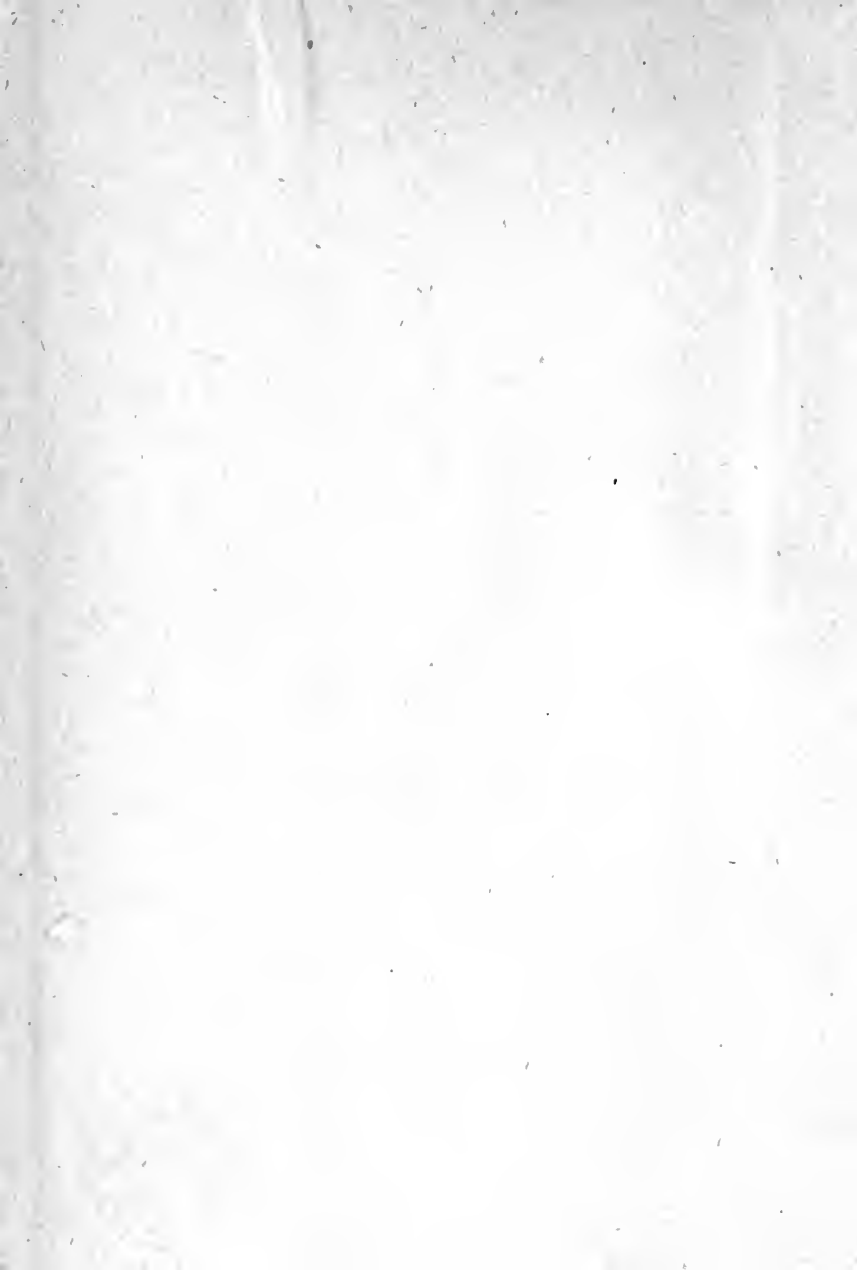


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# SCIENTIFIC DISTRIBUTION



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# SCIENTIFIC DISTRIBUTION

BY

CHARLES FREDERICK HIGHAM

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
JAMES HOWARD KEHLER



NEW YORK    ALFRED A. KNOPF    MCMXVIII

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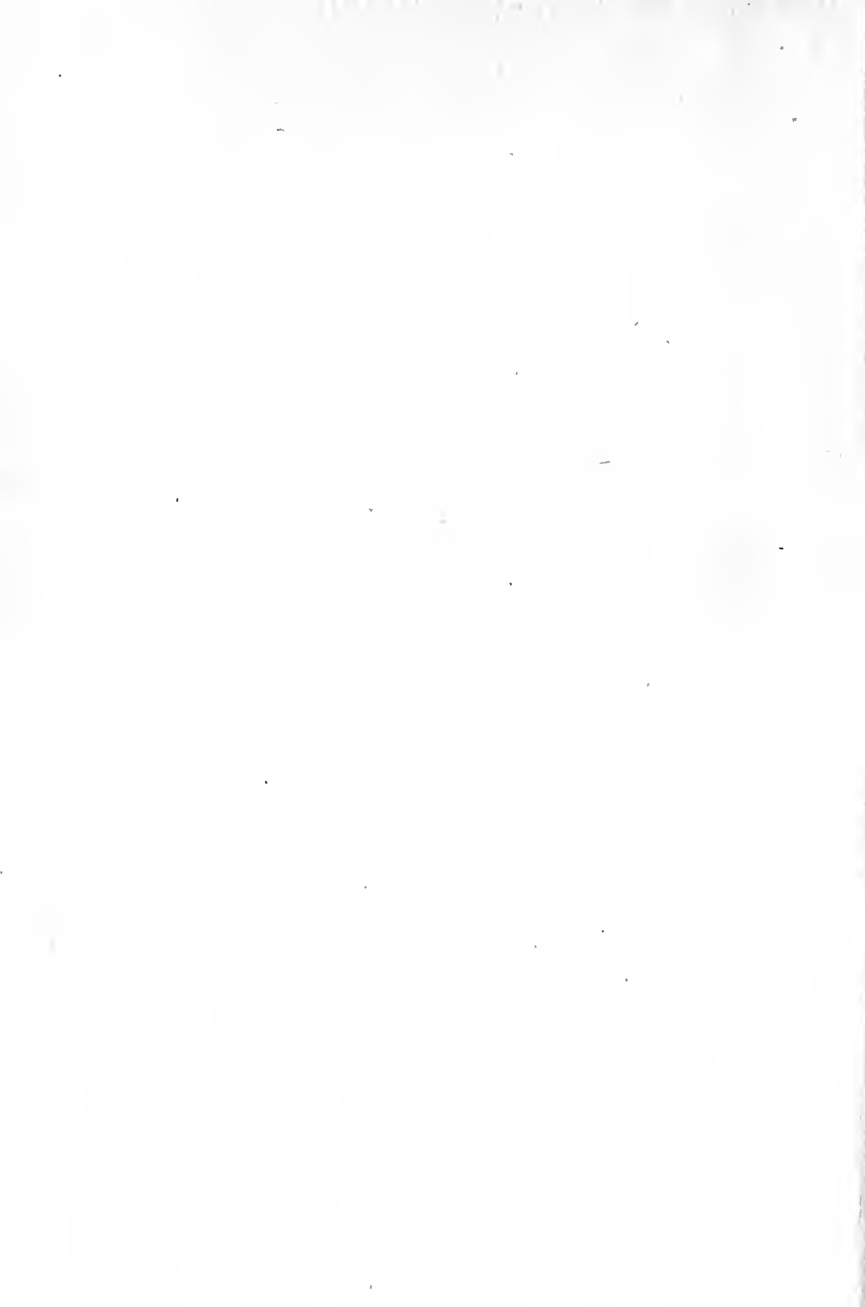
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## INTRODUCTION TO THE AMERICAN EDITION

**H**ERE is a book which clearly glimpses a spiritual content in some of our material pre-occupations and which sees in certain common processes of trade the technique of a new social order. Its importance lies not less in the intrinsic quality of its message than in the fact that this message proceeds from the workshop of a highly successful business man, and not from the school-room, the sanctum or the cloister.

Charles Frederick Higham is one of the leading advertisement agents of the world, perhaps the leading one outside the United States. His is a dominating figure in the London advertising field, where he introduced American advertising methods about ten years ago. Born in England, of English parents, he came to the United States in early youth and remained here for about fifteen years, nearly all of which were spent in

## INTRODUCTION

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acquiring the training and experience which enabled him practically to revolutionize the advertising methods of his own country. His success in London was immediate and has continued phenomenal. He has been one of the principal factors in England's wide-spread and highly successful war publicity and is now the candidate of his party for a seat in Parliament from one of the London boroughs.

The book is largely about advertising, but it goes far beyond the usual chatter of the profession regarding the technique of publicity as applied to commercial exploitation. Its author has a vision regarding his profession; a vision which comprehends something greatly more worth while than the increased distribution of commodities; namely, the distribution of ideas and ideals.

Those vast increases in the manufacture, distribution and sale of goods, in employment and wealth, which are due to modern advertising, are in themselves of the utmost social value, a fact which is in nowise overlooked by the author. He places a true estimate upon the benefits to

## *INTRODUCTION*

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society of the extension of markets for utilitarian wares.

But these are obvious values. No one questions the civilizing influence of such products as modern plumbing, motor cars, tooth brushes, sewing machines, reading matter, farm machinery, etc. And none questions the part played by advertising in making these products available to the world.

But there are few who see in advertising anything more than an effective ally of trade. Mr. Higham is one of these few. He sees this tremendous new force for what it is, one of the great undeveloped factors in human intercourse and communication, a potential ally of righteous government and sound education, a disseminator of intelligence and good will. He would add intellectual and moral functions to that which so effectively has served our material ends. In the laboratory of his own business he has proved the practical nature of his vision.

In commending this book to American readers I do so in the conviction that it says bigger and truer things about advertising than have been

## *INTRODUCTION*

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said before—things that have needed saying and that will, in the measure in which they are assimilated and developed by the practitioners of advertising, add luster and dignity and social value to that profession.

JAMES HOWARD KEHLER.



## INTRODUCTION

**N**O community of human beings has ever existed without feeling the dire need of some method of *making facts known*. Life is a series of astounding discoveries which must be shared to be worth while.

What one may call the act of distribution is therefore of infinite importance to the world. To spread ideas, disseminate intelligence, and deal out commodities in a scientific way helps to make a community more intelligent, more orderly, more prosperous.

As populations have increased, this business of distribution has become ever more complex and important, so much so that today it is undertaken with a good deal of vigor by a specialised body of men. The chief factor in all *organised* distribution is publicity, and the creation of publicity is an art needing considerable technical skill and psychological insight as well. The tool

the modern world has sharpened to enforce the proper distribution of its products and ideas is Advertisement. To establish the science of Making Known on its proper basis, as embracing *one of the direst needs in the world*, is the special object of this book.

Everything that has made human intercourse easier is good. Modern methods of transit, for example, have been one of the civilising factors of the age. By means of trains and ships and motor cars we are enabled to see the world, meet many different kinds of people, with differing temperaments, characteristics and ideals; and to experience the shock of new ideas. The telephone, the telegraph and wireless all serve a similar end. The more quickly and easily we get into touch with our neighbours and our neighbours' thoughts and actions, the more sensitive and sympathetic (i. e. the more civilised) we become.

All that is agreed upon. But the world does not yet realise that advertisement has a similar and equally important influence upon affairs. If this fact were realised there would be no stigma

attached to the word. Advertising would become a recognized profession, not merely the self-styled 'profession' that it is today. For whether national decrees are spread, commodities are sold, reputations extended, or ideas exchanged, the force we call publicity must always be employed.

Now only one sphere of activity has really recognised the forcefulness of good advertisement, mastered its principles, or learnt its technique—and that is the business world. Other spheres, such as various social and political groups, use it; but they use it in an ostrich-like fashion, unskilfully, and with an unnecessary and depressing amount of confusion. It is really a little comic that the business world should be made to bear all the stigma attached to publicity (we shall see later on why that stigma arose), since that world alone honestly and openly admits the value of this force, studies it, pays for it, and tries to perfect its technique. To whatever idealistic lengths Scientific Distribution may be carried in the years to come, it will for ever remain in debt to the business world for

its stumbling upbringing and brilliant *début* as a full-grown force. Business men have pioneered one of the most truly creative elements in life.

The time has arrived when enlightened men see that there is no emotional issue or economic impulse with an influence upon human action that advertising cannot touch. It dusts men's minds. In the commercial world it not only sells, it explains, interprets and teaches too. It helps to make the Public connoisseurs; it intensifies their powers of discrimination and adds to the social and economic welfare of the State. Advertising can so cheapen the cost of production that one-time luxuries become everyday necessities, with the result that a thousand refining influences are let loose upon society at large.

This is one of the most important points that its critics ignore. Think for one moment how the use of this force by industry has furthered hygiene, sanitation, nourishment, orderliness, and cleanliness. The higher standard of refinement in all classes of society today is largely due to the enlightenment that modern methods of scientific distribution bring about. By wise

advertisement one can rouse a community from a comatose, lethargic state, and instil, in place of this, a spirit of high enterprise and self-respect.

This stupendous process of vitalization is going on all the while. People do not recognise it, do not understand it, do not give any credit where it's due. And why? Because as the old adage has it: 'The onlooker sees most of the game.' And in this game so few of us are onlookers; nearly all of us participate.

This book is an effort to 'look on,' to make the world more conscious of a force with illimitable powers—one, I believe, with a great destiny ahead of it, mightier than anybody yet has an inkling of. It is difficult to write because, to a great extent, one is dealing with a word that men dislike, with a force that has too often been mishandled and spoilt. The thought of this is always in the author's mind. Those who read this book with intelligence must shift their perspective; wipe out old valuations and replace them by new ones; get away from the stale idea that this force is only used to sell; see it as a *distributing force* instead.

Salesmanship is but one facet of the gem advertisement. It has been over-emphasised, misused, misrepresented, misunderstood. But so far it is the only *organised* facet. Of the others the world has everything to learn.

All intelligence has been spread by means of advertisement in some shape or form. All great reputations are made in the same way. The wealth of modern nations is, to a totally unrecognised extent, due to the same force. Goods have seldom been manufactured to supply a *conscious* demand. The demand, as well as the goods, has been created. This demand or market has been *organised*. Had inventors and business men waited for the public to say: 'That's just what we want; come on!' the world would be poorer by millions of pounds than she is to-day. Mr. Herbert N. Casson's racy description of the world's hostility to new ideas is proof of this:—

"There was no demand for the Railroad," he writes, "and for many years people believed that thirty miles an hour would stop the circulation of the blood. There was no demand for the Steamboat, and when Brunel drove the first boat

by steam on the Thames, he became so unpopular that the London hotels refused to give him room. There was no demand for the Sewing-machine, and the first machine that Howe put on exhibition was smashed to pieces by a Boston mob. There was no demand for the Telegraph, and Morse had to plead and beg before ten Congresses before he received any attention. There was no demand for the Airbrake, and Westinghouse was called a fool by every railroad expert, because he asserted that he could stop a train with air. There was no demand for Gas light, and all the candle-burners sneered at Murdoch for trying to have a lamp without a wick. There was no demand for the Reaper, and McCormick preached his gospel of efficient harvesting for fourteen years before he sold his first hundred machines."

But, since McCormick won a market through publicity, his factories have made and sold over six million harvesters. And the telephone, in America, as the result of advertisement, represents something like three hundred million pounds of capital today. Yet only thirty-six years ago the telephone was called a "scientific toy." . . .

The truth is there has seldom been a market in the last half-century (the most important century in all industrial history) that has not been created through the awakening of the public mind by organized publicity.

Think of the colossal wealth due, then, to this great force. Communities of people have gained employment by its aid, and through increased earnings due to its effective use have found the one and only means of decent living.

And this organised publicity does not only consist of dramatic announcements in the pages of the Press. The advertising man to-day is busy perfecting the business of forcing an appeal in countless different ways.

*Publicity has a part to play in all forms of distribution*—whether it be the distribution of goods from the manufacturers direct to the public at large, or from the manufacturers to the trade or to professional men; whether it is a question of how best a monster shipbuilding firm may reach the ear of governments, or what a little shop should do to catch the glance of



every passer-by. Few as yet have any idea of the ingenuity with which the advertising expert can solve problems such as these, or how far he penetrates behind the scenes in industry in order to discover at what point he can introduce that touch of distinction and efficiency which has always such a striking and, therefore, saleable effect. (See page 93.) He has made himself a consultant for all forms of organic weakness in the business world; and those firms that have recognised the value of his services—though they may never use the Press for the distribution of their goods—generally stand out as organizations of a particularly alert and serviceable kind.

If, by more or less haphazard publicity, Intelligence has been distributed throughout the ages; and, later, by more scientific advertising the distribution of Commodities effected; can we not carry the working of this force to its logical conclusion, and claim that when we learn to use it in a completely scientific manner it will serve *to spread Ideas?*

We distribute Goods to-day with far more skill

than we distribute Thought. Ideas are born and problems arise which are wasted and muddled for lack of any *system* in our methods of making their urgency known. The great unconverted remain unconverted, and always will, until it is seen that the powerful factor which has made a discriminating buying public, could also produce that far greater thing—a truly enlightened Public Opinion.

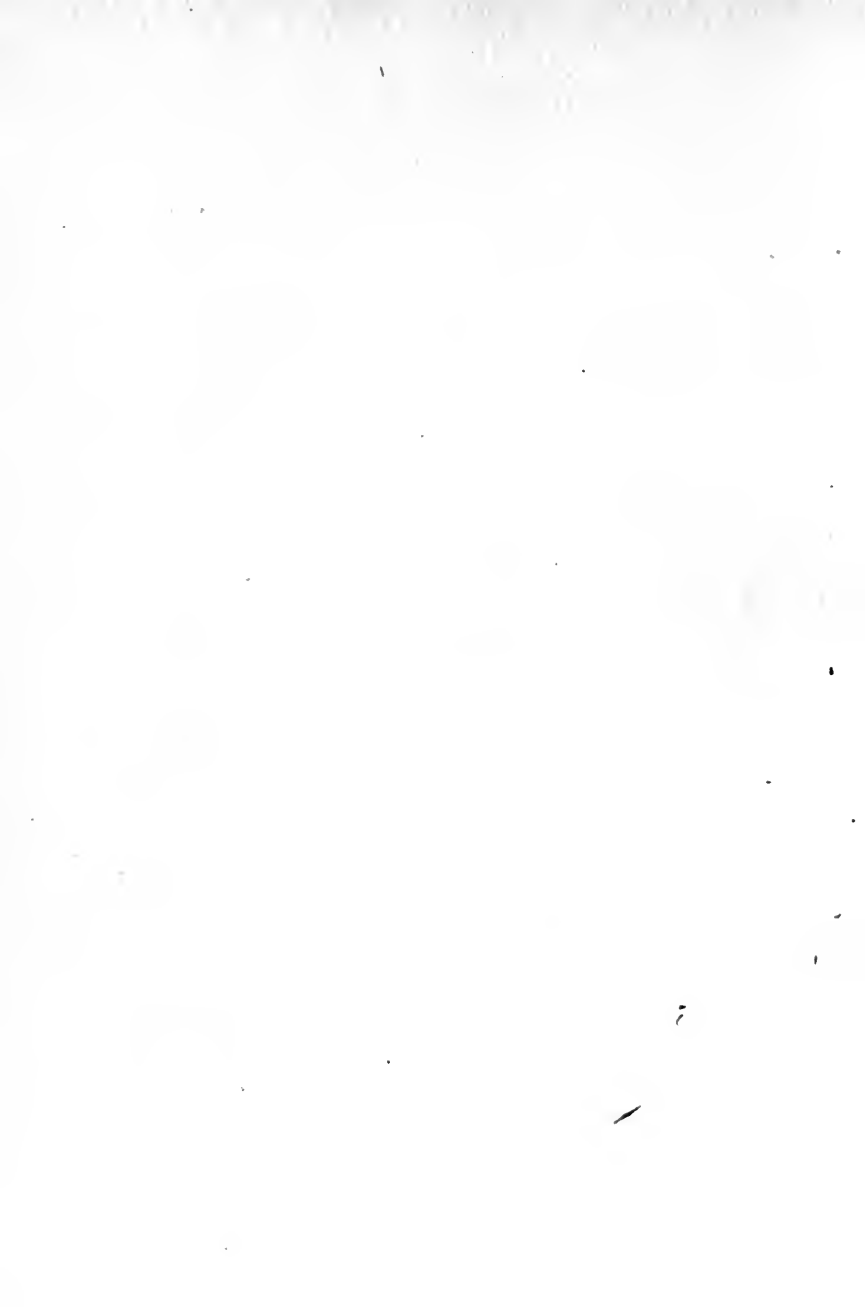
The progress of the world waits upon the thought of the majority. How best to educate, clarify, vivify a Nation's collective mind is therefore the one comprehensive problem. It is this ideal that lies behind all the argument in the pages of this book. (See Part II.)

The writer has tried to review the history of advertising with this logical conclusion as the final note. Advertising is not only a selling force; it is the force which should work the scientific distribution of *all forms of intelligence*.

C. F. H.

London, 1917.

**PART I**  
**THE HISTORICAL ASPECT**



# SCIENTIFIC DISTRIBUTION

## CHAPTER I

### THE DISTRIBUTION OF INTELLIGENCE

THE significance of a subject can never be fully appreciated unless one starts expounding it at the beginning. One does not begin with advertising, therefore, at that comparatively recent stage when it became a recognized factor in business strategy. For advertising (this is a fact I shall repeat over and over again!) is fundamentally a *distributing* force; it becomes a *selling* force only when used in *industry*.

In the beginning, then, what do we find? We find old Mother Gossip—immortal creature, whose powers of tonguemanishp have done so much to amuse and enlighten the world.

Old Mother Gossip has had many unpleasant

charges laid at her door. To these I will now add another—one that has not been made before. *She was the first advertising agent known to man.* In those days when man was rich if he possessed a bearskin, a flint arrow-head and a club, and woman belonged to *le beau monde* if she wore a few bone hairpins and a petticoat of wild-cat fur—in those days intelligence was distributed by word of mouth. Women, by nature garrulous, inquisitive and practical, no doubt did the advertising for their tribes. The more talkative, avaricious and neighbourly they were, the more potent their socializing influence became. Silence in those days must have been an anti-social thing. Those whose eyes and ears were widest open, those with the longest tongues, with the strongest passion to acquire, the most acute desire to go one better than their neighbours—such people were the chief channel for the distribution of intelligence, the only means by which *facts became known.*

The great advertising centre in Great Britain in those days must have been Stonehenge.

There the people met periodically, ostensibly for religious rites, but what a rich store of material knowledge was diffused from the top of that wind-swept plain! How the people must have talked! What marvellous news was spread and shared! Even to this day the congregations gather in the churchyards after service to discuss the topics of the day, to take sly note of the latest fashion, and exchange ideas. . . .

Tribes, we know, were jealous, watertight communities, who would share nothing with each other; loving "rows." The first real step in social advancement was when these futile barriers were broken down, and the tribes were merged into communities, sharing their knowledge, advertising (still by word of mouth) their discoveries, their rituals and their laws. Then the socialization of mankind began to take effect. For only as knowledge has been distributed in ever-widening circles has civilization spread.

There is no difference between such early advertising and the advertising of today, except that the former was haphazard—news being

distributed verbally, and the latter is more or less organized—news being distributed by the Press.

But the day came to the ancient Peoples when the art of lettering was understood; and we find Greece and Rome just as skilled in advertising as their limited media would allow.

Poster advertising has a most respectable and interesting lineage. The Greeks and Romans made quite an art of what we call hoarding or billboard publicity. The people of Pompeii and Herculaneum covered their walls in crowded thoroughfares with announcements painted in black and red. They advertised their plays, their exhibitions and gladiatorial shows, their salt- and fresh-water baths with a touching permanence. Bills called *libelli* acquainted the public of sales of estates, absconded debtors and things lost or found. Police regulations were made known by signs suspended on the walls. Some of these signs were painted, but those of a more permanent nature were in stone or terra-cotta relief, and set in the pilasters decorating the front



of prominent buildings. There is preserved in the British Museum today a scrap of papyrus found among the ruins of Thebes, on which an Egyptian landowner living three thousand years ago advertised the loss of a runaway slave.

Kings and prophets in Hebrew days soon discovered that the spoken word gave insufficient publicity to their teaching and decrees. They were far-sighted enough to have them inscribed on parchment, and these parchments were prominently displayed in the public places of important cities. These public notices, together with the public crier, served best to distribute intelligence in those far-off days.

In ancient Greece the crier was a very splendid person, an officer of the State and Municipal Government, accompanied always by a musician, and using the most flowery, rhetorical language his dramatic mind could conceive. It is only natural that Athens and Rome, possessing two of the greatest, most orderly modes of government the world has ever seen, should have given to their methods of publicity an air of studied dig-

nity and grace. In this respect (as with so many others) the modern world has everything to learn from them. . . .

The decay of the Roman civilization snuffed out learning for a time, but when Europe emerged from semi-barbarism it was to reinstate publicity as an important factor in the conduct of affairs. The public criers of the Middle Ages were an organised body of great repute. They were functionaries of the State, but they were also concerned with the distribution of commercial intelligence. When their peculiar call rang through the market-place, people rushed from their homes to hear the news. For the crier possessed the exclusive right of proclaiming sales by auction, and judicial sales of real and personal estate. He described with great vigour all kinds of merchandise, and shouted a list of things lost and found. An attentive listener learnt of His Majesty's latest decrees, of the mandates of the Mayor, the time the stage coach was to start, news of weddings, christenings and funerals, and the date of the local fair. The shouting of these proclamations in the streets merely antedated the

shoutings of our news-vendors today, with their shrill calls, and their "speshull" that prods the curiosity of the most hardened Londoner.

Little by little the function of the public crier was degraded, for the moment a method is out of date its prestige begins to wane. The growth of the population became a factor that swamped the potency of his appeal; while merchants, grown more cunning, employed 'prentices or hawkers to shout the merits of their wares. But the raucous-voiced crier (a pitiful object in comparison with his Athenian predecessor) lingered on; may still be heard in some tradition-loving country towns.

I've seen one come strolling out of a back street swinging his monstrous bell, and having taken up a good position at some corner where the children play and a couple of loafers lean smoking against a wall, give forth, in his peculiar, unintelligible jargon, certain items of intelligence, the sense of which remains forever mysterious and unknown. The children don't even stop their game; the two loafers languidly remove their pipes, spit solemnly, and

watch him out of sight. Despite his effort, they remain unmoved, uninformed. The life of the little town proceeds, some hundreds of its inhabitants out of ear-shot even of the bell; and the "Oyez, oyez," melts away, a trifle pathetic, like all outworn things.

Compared with the noise made by the street hawkers and 'prentices in bawling their wares, our taxi whistle nuisance or the rumble of the motor 'bus is the most flickering disturbance of our quietude. Press advertising has undoubtedly helped to give silence to our cities—yes, *silence*, in comparison with bygone days. The racket was tremendous even in the eighteenth century. All day long shrill cries went forth of "Buy, buy, buy,": "Rally up, ladies": "What d'ye lack?" from an unending procession of hawkers that moved up and down the narrow streets. A faint hint of the shouting and gesticulation that went on may still be heard in Putney Market, Portobello Road, the North End Road, or Vauxhall Bridge Road on a Saturday night.

There were those who offered to do things—

to mend chairs, grind knives, solder pots and pans, buy rags and rabbit skins, hair and rusty swords, cooper casks or exchange old clothes and wigs; and those who offered to sell things—barley broth, rice, milk, furmity, cakes, eggs, lily white vinegar, hot peas-cod, rabbits, birds, pullets, oysters, gingerbread, honey, hot codlins, pippins, fruit of all kinds, fish, tarts, lavender, shrimps, ink, lace, coal, earthenware, combs, buckles, socks, wrappers, brimstone matches, scissors, shoelaces, tools and straps. The list is unending, but the “cries” were all distinct, and the touter’s stock-in-trade was the shrillness of his vocal organ! His business was the business of the modern advertiser—to distribute merchandise.

Then the elaborate banners of the English Mediæval Guilds and the great City Companies were of the poster advertising order. The mightier the Guild the more elaborate its device, and the more its emblazoned glory impressed the crowds that lined the streets with the prestige and wealth of the Weavers and Mercers, Glovers, Goldsmiths or Haberdashers, as the case might be.

Ah, those fine old Guilds! There was never a more dignified era in trade than when they were at the height of their prosperity.

The use of signs was, as we have seen, a very old advertising device. Throughout the illiterate Middle Ages every trade had its sign, which was suspended either from projecting metal work, stuck up on a post, or made to form a miniature triumphal archway. As the towns grew and the narrow streets were lined on either side with little overhanging shops, these signs stuck out from the doorways, ponderous and creaking drearily in the silence of the night. Often they fell upon the heads of passers by, and about 1762, by Act of Parliament, all London signboards were removed, or else fixed firmly to the front of buildings.

On these boards were painted highly coloured symbols to attract the attention of all those who walked abroad. The pawnbroker suspended three golden balls above his doorway; the tailor showed a pair of scissors; the barber a gaily decorated pole; the magic compounds of the pharmacy were suggested by the painting of a pestle

and mortar; a cutter showed a knife and a glover a hand. Even in those days famous artists were not above painting signs for advertising purposes. Artistic snobbery did not prevent Holbein, Correggio, Hogarth, Morland and David Cox, among others, from painting signboards, chiefly for the decoration of country inns. To this day no self-respecting inn is without the device that proclaims it a *public* house, and draws the attention of the passer-by to the fact that this hostelry is the Marquis of Granby, The Pig and Whistle, the Goat and Compasses (God Encompasses), or the Bag o' Nails (Bacchanals).

Modern trade-marks are a more particularized form of the old signboard idea.

\* \* \* \* \*

The closing years of the fifteenth century heralded a new era for Great Britain. Somewhere about 1477 William Caxton brought the first printing-press to England and set up his workshop in the precincts of Westminster Abbey. The influence of the printing press upon advertisement, as upon all that tends to enlighten mankind, is too obvious to need description. Print-

ing is by far the most powerful weapon that man has ever possessed for the furtherance of his will. The Press tends to become as influential as Parliament itself; it has already greater powers of moral persuasion than the Church; and since it has become the medium for the scientific distribution of commodities, it has helped to pour millions into the coffers of the State.

When Caxton started to print his *siquis* (hand-bills or posters from the Latin *si quis* meaning "if anybody"—most of them began with these words) he initiated a method of "making known" of the most far-reaching consequence. Very soon notoriety for books and plays and boxing-shows was sought for by the use of *Siquis*. They were posted up on taverns, town halls, cathedrals, churches—wherever crowds congregated or people strolled. Then, later, small pamphlets or news sheets appeared, foreshadowing the modern newspaper with its ingenious presentation of current news. These news sheets were first published only when money, labour and paper allowed. Hundreds of them appeared between the years 1600–1650, but no systematic publica-



tion of news took place before the appearance in 1632 of Nathaniel Butter's famous *Weekley News*. Then, in the time of Cromwell and Charles I, the need for the publication of war news became so acute that several weekly journals appeared, took sides, and flourished on a more permanent basis than before. They bore extraordinarily long and rambling titles, and Lord Macaulay calls it the "Age of the Mercuries" because so many of them favoured that name.

There was very little Press etiquette in those fiery days. The rivals of the *Mercurius Aulicus* were particularly venomous. One claimed to send itself abroad to "prevent misinformation." The *Scottish Dove* appeared self-styled as "an antidote against the poisoned insinuations of Mercurius Aulicus, and the errors of the other intelligencers." The editor of the *Mercurius Britannicus* (1648), writing to his "well-affected readers," says proudly: "'Tis to thee I write: as for the malignant, ignorant rabble, I value them not."

This is the best example one could find of

*elementary* advertising, which is little more than a tremendous effort to disparage one's rivals; as though to say biting things about them were sufficient and unanswerable recommendation of oneself!

Creative modern advertising is utterly opposed to such unmannerly proceedings. For it is not only necessary to make a reputation for one's own commodity—razors or soaps, whatever it may be. The good name of razors and soaps *as commodities* has to be preserved as well. Thus the good advertiser of a special brand of soap improves the whole market for soap; makes soap *quâ* soap a desirable thing; which benefits his rivals and the community at large no less than himself.

But the world has learnt a great deal since 1643, as we shall see.

*The Ladies' Mercury* gives us an example of the distribution of intelligence affecting other things than trade—social reputations, for example, and the arts of love.

It undertook to answer all questions relating to love “with all the zeal and softness becoming

the (female) sex.” And the Duchess of Gordon’s *flair* for costume is enormously *made known* when, giving a description of the dresses worn at a Court function, her appearance was proclaimed “as rich as finery could accomplish.” The amount of free advertisement Duchesses can get has always been remarkable. If a Duke went into business it is possible he would never have to pay for newspaper space at all!

With the regular publication of journals advertising as a distributing force sprang into startling prominence. So much so that sometimes whole newspapers were given up exclusively to the art of making-known. Such was the *Publick Advertiser*, founded in England in 1675, while the *Journal d’Affiches* had appeared in France as early as 1612. But gradually more and more advertisements appeared in the regular Press, and the fortunes of these journals rose and fell, were improved or modified, by the factors affecting advertising—taxes, for example, and commercial stability.

Nathaniel Butter, the first editor to accept a trade announcement, laid the foundations of one

of the biggest sources of revenue ever known. Today, circulation plays a very minor part in the profit earned by the Press. There is, in fact, a point with many weekly journals when circulation is best curtailed. The *class of readers a paper reaches* is of as much consideration to an advertiser as its average of sales. The revenue from trade announcements is the source of a newspaper's wealth. The aggregate sum made by the Press in selling space upon its pages runs into many millions a year. The first person to pay his florin (oh, happy man!) for space in *Mist's Weekly Journal* was opening up a gold mine for the Press that leaves the Klondyke pauperized. . . .

Another pioneer of advertising was Sir Robert L'Estrange. He was the first man who really tried to convince the public of its deep significance. Three famous publications were his—the *Intelligencer* (August, 1663), the *Newes* (September, 1663), and the *Mercury, or Advertisements concerning Trade* (1668). Twenty years later another shrewd man, John Houghton by name, founded a weekly paper called *A Col-*

lection for the Improvement of Husbandry and Trade. The "collection" consisted of current prices and trade bulletins. One of the advertisements in this indefatigable journal ran as follows:

"One that has been a Clerk to a Justice of the Peace desires to be so again; or he would look to a warehouse, or be a butler. He can shave and give reasonable security."

Shades of non-specialization! That in the seventeenth century one could be a good clerk, warehouseman, butler and barber with equal ease!

Then with the publication of the *Daily Courant*, 1702, daily papers became the most popular of all advertising media. They had greater news value, and, therefore, bigger circulations; while the trade announcements often had a bearing on current questions of the day, and gathered emphasis from this proximity.

Coffee houses soon became primitive advertising agencies. They collected advertorial copy for the Press and passed it on. The Star in St. Paul's Churchyard, Suttle's Coffee House in

Finch Lane, and another in Ave Maria Lane, were all *rendezvous* for advertisers. One can hardly imagine our vast, complex, highly specialized agencies doing business over a bar!

Ready money was required for these seventeenth-century advertisements, and the first illustrated announcements were made in 1725.

*The New York Journal* prints this interesting statement in 1766: "To be sold, for no fault, a very good wench, 22 years old, with a child 18 months old. Enquire of the Printer!"

Here is a silk mercer's advertisement taken from the pages of Addison's *Spectator* of 1711: "Mrs. Attway states that she will sell a quantity of good silk gowns, a parcel of rich brocades, venetian and thread satins, tissues and damasks—great pennyworths bought of people that have failed."

How infinitely prettier is that last remark than our bald modern term, "bankrupt stock."

The credulity of the public was soon hard taxed, and rogues made temporary fortunes out of unsophisticated readers. One wonders how many of them were enticed to buy "Princes'

Cherry Lotion, which refreshes the mouth and immediately sweetens the breath: fastens teeth though ever so loose; and strengthens tender gums. Half a guinea a box. Directions inclosed."

The "Virtues of Coffee" were wondrously described in the *Public Advertiser* on May 19, 1657:

"In Bartholomew Lane, on the backside of the Old Exchange, the drink called Coffee, which is a very wholesom and Physical drink, having many excellent vertues, closes the Orifice of the Stomach, fortifies the heat within, helpeth Digestion, quickeneth the Spirits, maketh the heart lightsom, is good against Eye-Sores, Coughs or Colds, Rheums, Consumptions, Headache, Dropsie, Gout, Scurvy, King's Evil, and many others, is to be sold both in the morning and at three of the clock in the afternoon."

It was, and is, alas! such idiotic exaggerations that cast a stigma upon advertisement from which it is not yet wholly free.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have seen the distribution of news passed

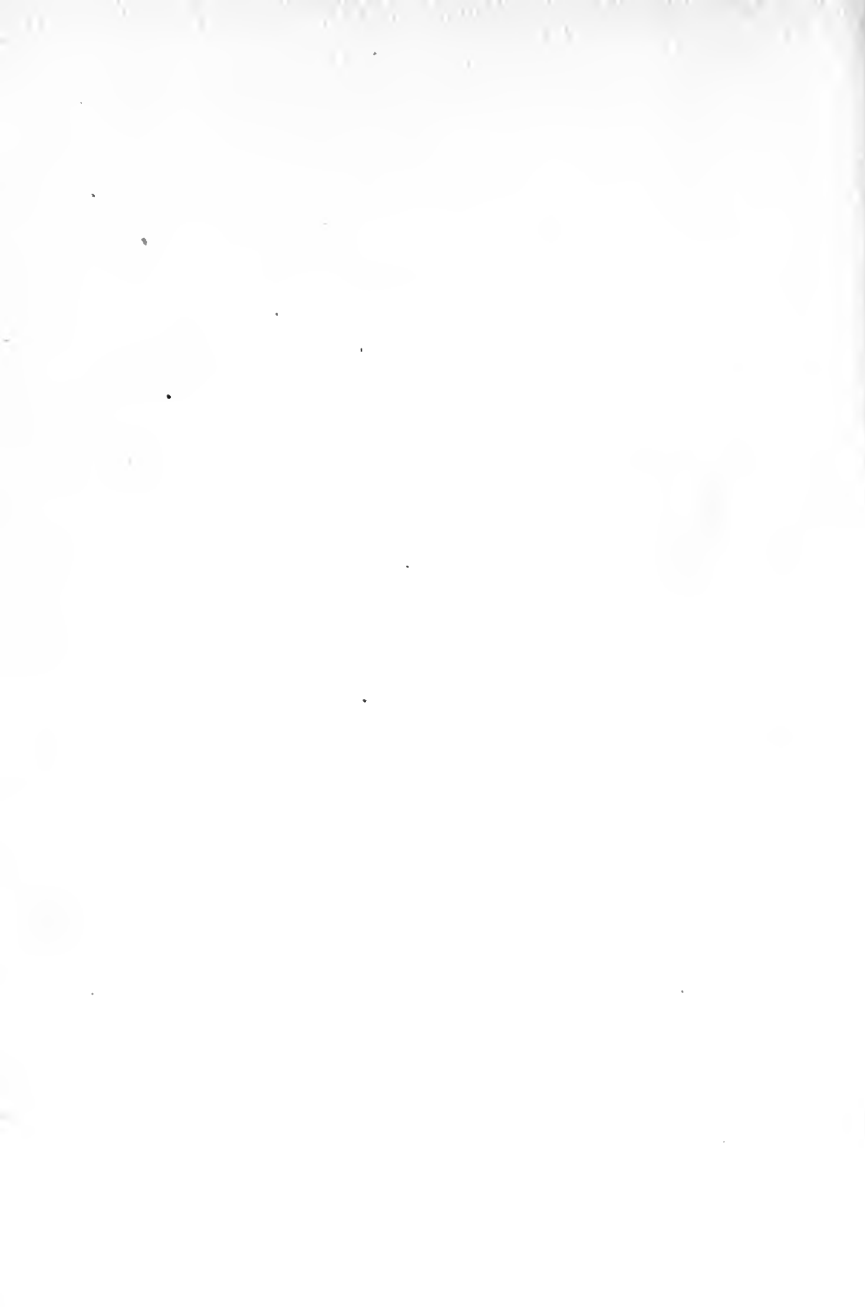
on haphazard by word of mouth; we have seen it, with the growth of towns, passed on from one mouth to many ears; and still later, with the birth of the Press, seen it distributed through this medium to first hundreds, then thousands, and now millions of people every day.

Press advertising is the inevitable outcome of the broadening of the world's horizon. By no other method can one make a National appeal. Other forms of publicity serve for local purposes. But once a person, a company, a firm, a play-house, a railway, an opera-house, a political party, a municipality, or a social or artistic star wishes to distribute, to a wide area, news about himself or herself or it or them, the pages of the Press have to be used. And whether that publicity is got by payment, by influence, or bribery, the *force employed* is just the same; and the need expressed is the age-old need—to keep the public informed.



PART II

THE MODERN ASPECT



## CHAPTER II

### THE SCIENTIFIC DISTRIBUTION OF COMMODITIES TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

**A**DVERTISING began to be used in a more or less scientific manner about half a century ago. The influence of machinery had done for production what a forcing house does for plants. And because of this abnormal growth it became an easier thing to make than to sell. Production outstepped distribution in efficiency.

Ignorant people are still heard to say that they "don't believe in advertisements." The remark shows an almost incredible lack of common sense. And the best way to answer them is to ask, as gently as one can, "If you had invented something, or made something that was useful, or written something about which you held certain passionate beliefs, what would be your dominating wish?"

Their answer—their one and only answer—is, that they would wish *to make it known*. And that act of making known is called advertisement. The keener the competition, the more fervent the wish becomes. The bigger the idea, the wider the publicity should be. The world has always used this force to further its great dreams.

At that point in industrial history where it became imperative to make facts of commercial interest known in a bolder and more decisive way, advertising at last began to take scientific shape and form. Markets were flooded; machinery had increased output to an unprecedented degree; populations were doubling and trebling themselves; there were a hundred new ways of coining wealth if a means could be found for distributing goods.

But the full potency of scientific advertising remained a mystery for some time. Amusing stories are told of those days which illustrate this fact. One is of Robert Bonner, the publisher of *The New York Ledger*, who wrote out a modest announcement for *The Herald* consisting of eight words:

“READ MRS. SOUTHWORTH’S  
NEW STORY IN THE LEDGER,”

and marked for “one line.” But Bonner’s writing was so bad that the words were read in the *Herald* office as “one page”; and the poor man was horrified next morning to find a page of the *Herald* devoted to the seemingly unending repetition of his modest line. He had not enough money to pay for the space. He rushed round to the newspaper office in despair, but nothing could be done. It was a case of “To you endless announcements,” as Walt Whitman would say.

Then suddenly orders began to pour in for *The Ledger* in unexpected volume. Soon the first edition was sold out and another one printed at top speed. And Mr. Bonner learnt through this “mistake” the potency of advertising, a lesson he acted upon for the rest of his life. . . .

As a profession, then, advertising is quite new but as a power it is as old as man.

It is no longer an unconscious factor in human existence, but a *positive* force, a guiding influence affecting our standard of living. Its aim

is to direct the will of the crowd regarding all marketable things.

Already the greatest of its achievements is being realised, and that is the way in which it has helped to dispel dishonesty from trade. Goods sold by means of consistent advertisement are sold on their merits alone. Only truth can stand for long the limelight of organised publicity.

All sorts of fraudulent people used advertisement to make big fortunes in the middle of the nineteenth century. Patent-medicine vendors, sharp-witted rogues, filled the newspapers with vulgar, exaggerating statements, which hoodwinked the unsophisticated public, and very quickly gave advertising such a shocking name that some of the old stigma remains to this day. It is a significant fact, however, that such advertisers were short-lived. Most of them died poor men, and the names of their fraudulent "elixirs" are forgotten. All patent medicines that survive long periods of publicity are simple, honest remedies for the common ailments of mankind. Those appearing to-day and gone to-morrow,

and those shame-faced, roundabout announcements that endeavour to deceive the public by appearing in editorial guise (which no self-respecting newspaper should consent to print to-day), have a short vogue if a merry one. Only the least educated sections of society are deceived; and if the newspapers did their duty by their readers, they would expel all such announcements from the pages of the Press.

The modern advertisement is damned the moment it suggests exaggeration. In America, where the public live in a blast-furnace of announcement, the sins this force committed in its hysterical, ignorant youth are being paid for now. The Americans, *as individuals*, have the most righteous dread of "boosting." They scent it from afar as retrievers scent game. In this respect, so fierce has been their training, they have become the most discriminating, sophisticated public in the world; and an advertisement, to penetrate such worldliness, has to be exceptionally good.

Advertising, one must repeat, has compelled a larger measure of commercial honesty. Had it

done nothing else it would have justified itself. But it has achieved a number of other excellent results, as we shall see, and won for itself at last a place of much distinction in affairs.

One thing, however, we have to remember. The art of scientific advertising was born in America, and its most brilliant developments hail from that land of business giants. When, a few years ago, the *Times* sent an expert to that country to report on its industrial efficiency, his verdict on its advertising was decisive:

“In the art of advertising,” he reported, “the Americans lead the world. The English humbly follow at a respectful distance, and no one else is in sight.”

In writing of the excellence of ultra-modern advertising, one is often speaking of improvements that are not general in England, but practised only by the most efficient and far-sighted advertising men. Yet when English advertising is good, “it is very, very good,” as an American critic said the other day when gazing jealously upon the magnificent poster work displayed by the Underground Railways in London.



All professions have sown their wild oats. Advertising, being one of an essentially exuberant nature, had a big crop in its early days! But it is no longer necessary to make excuses for organised publicity, and from now onwards in this book we will regard it unflinchingly as a most acceptable and highly interesting factor in twentieth-century life.

## CHAPTER III

### THE VALUE OF ADVERTISEMENT TO THE PRODUCER AND RETAILER

**P**RODUCTION is *not* a difficult thing in these inventive days. The more complex life becomes the more man busies himself with the simplification of that complexity. Consequently, there are a thousand channels into which his creative, unceasing energy can be directed. And with machinery to standardise processes of manufacture, and the new-found science of organisation to minimise friction and harmonise results, production is much less of a struggle than it used to be.

The struggle begins when the act of production is more or less perfected. The whole difficulty nowadays lies in *distributing or selling goods*. How to create a market; how to effect

an introduction between the commodity and the consumer; how to emphasize points of difference or superiority between one's own goods and those of competitors; how to create new vogues—those are the difficulties that need the greatest ingenuity to overcome.

At once we see that without advertisement manufactures would be baulked of their most cherished end.

In the first part of this book we noted some of the early methods of distribution. None of them—with the exception of posters—are of the slightest use to-day. Were symbols used our streets would show such a riot of devices that familiarity would breed contempt. Did we make our most eloquent orators Town Criers, pay them exorbitant salaries, provide them with megaphones, and post them at thickly populated centres such as Piccadilly Circus, their highest flights of eloquence would be abortive. The flower-women would become exceptionally well informed, but no commercial purpose would be served. Processions of merchants with their trade-marks emblazoned upon banners would

merely become feeble imitations of the Lord Mayor's Show; and were the Selfridges of London to shout their slogans in the streets, the rattle of the democratic 'bus and the open exhaust of the ubiquitous motor-car would drown their clever word-mongering with noise.

No, the only ancient method of advertisement that has survived since early days is the poster—in short, the printed word. And it is due to the skilful handling of printed announcements that a grave deadlock between production and distribution has been prevented.

Markets have, of course, been created without Press publicity. Coal, tin, iron, rubber, have all been distributed without this force. Railways have only recently begun to advertise, and battleships and munitions of war are bought and sold without any public announcements being made. But how long this will last is quite a debatable proposition, since international advertising is bound to come with the march of time. It seems safe to say that only those commodities appealing to the general public have been influenced by Press advertising up to now.

(a) ITS INFLUENCE UPON PRODUCTION

The first thing that advertising does for the producer and distributor is to create a market for their goods, to make them known. If the goods are a novelty, then an educational campaign is needed along general lines, which awakens people's minds, by presenting them with a lucid arresting analysis of how the goods are made and what they claim to do.

And when the vogue has been created and the public, or that section of the public to which the appeal has been made, shows responsiveness, then the advertising gets down to facts more closely, as a parliamentary speaker tabulates his arguments when he wishes to become concise.

To a careful reasoning attractively displayed, the buying public is led from (1) indifference to (2) attention, on to (3) interest, then (4) self-interest, and ultimately to (5) a desire to possess which is sufficiently strong to (6) impel action.

It is a perfectly legitimate and entirely scientific method of enlightenment resulting in sales.

The next thing that advertising does for the producer is to reduce his selling cost by increasing the demand for his goods without at the same time making any proportionate increase in his annual or total selling expense. In this simple definition lies the crux of the matter. Yet it is extraordinary how many business men, although given proof of what has been done in the case of thousands of firms, still disbelieve it; or still imagine such a result must have been won "more by good luck than management."

As markets have widened in the past so the growth of competition has forced up the cost of selling until sometimes it is four, five and six times greater than the cost of manufacture. It averages in general twice the cost. To lessen that cost, to devise a method whereby this wasteful disproportion is reduced, has been the problem advertising has successfully solved.

A third thing it has done.

Every one knows that a big factory can manufacture at far less expense, in relation to its output, than can a little one; that a big store can afford to sell things cheaper than a little shop.

So where by advertising the output of a factory is doubled, or the custom of a shop or store vastly increased, both are put into the happy position of being able to employ methods only possible with organisations of a certain size. For the bigger the scale of operations in the business world, the more economical, efficient, labour-saving, do methods, systems, processes become. Machinery of the most up-to-date description can be introduced, and then that true economy of energy obtained which is the secret of all success.

Fourthly, advertising helps to consolidate the reputation of good merchandise. Goods, like human beings, have a great pull over the rank and file if their reputation is above reproach. The reputation of public men is made for them by the Press. They have but to *show* superiority, and soon the news of it is spread abroad. The reputation of commodities has been made in the same way. With this one difference: that in crowded modern markets, hearsay is not enough—*facts must be proved*.

Those manufacturers and merchants who allow “the goods to sell themselves,” depending

on the personal recommendation of consumers, do so at the expense of selling costs, which, because their markets are limited and slow, are bound to be extremely high. This was a fairly safe procedure when competition was comparatively slight. It is suicidal to-day. Even the large corporate bodies have found that the goodwill of the public is a thing only gained and *kept* by unremitting effort. Proof must be continuously given that the goodwill is merited, that the reputation is not being abused. Advertisers have to realise that at least one-third of their yearly appropriation is being spent in the act of guarding their trade-mark name. The trade-mark once made known and then constantly kept in the mind of the buying public automatically increases distribution. Any firm could make Colman's Mustard: the asset is the advertised brand. The value of the trade-mark to this mustard firm is worth millions of money in comparison to the thousands they possess in stock and plant.

(b) ITS INFLUENCE UPON SALESMANSHIP

"Selling and advertising," one writer has

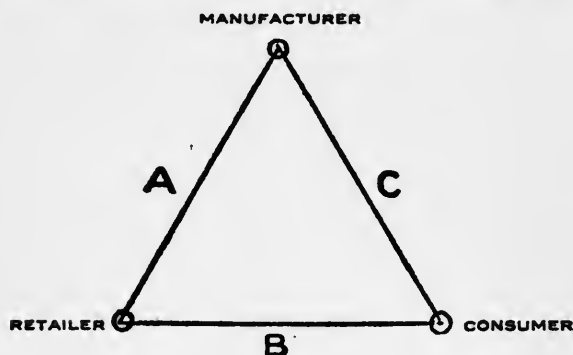


said, "are inseparable units of the same thing—salesmanship."

When one comes to analyse what salesmanship implies in this complicated age, one begins to realise the deep fascination business has for clever, competent men. No two methods of sale are exactly alike, and yet every business has some relation to a particular human sensibility, on which some impression can be made by scientific means. Salesmanship means knowing how to handle words and people as well as goods; it means harmonising as many varied interests as one can. Production may be completely standardised, but there is always something of the human element in salesmanship; something uncertain, something to be studied, understood, persuaded. The person who undertakes to deal with this elusive thing, to co-ordinate the interests of the public with those of the manufacturer and merchant, to present the latter's case, to interpret their wares (as far as printed matter is concerned) is the advertising man.

There is a thing known as the Business Triangle, and once upon a time a chain of middle-

men (jobbers, wholesale houses, agents) was the only connection between the two poles on the line marked A. An uncertain acquaintanceship formed the link between the two poles on the line



marked B; and there was no possible means of communication between those on the line marked C.

But now great national advertising campaigns bring the three points of the triangle into the closest sympathy. The business world has a well-constructed nervous system, through which items of intelligence are distributed with marvelous speed and success.

Hundreds of manufacturers are in close personal touch to-day (by means of advertisement)

with the consumer. These firms also originate selling campaigns in which the retailer is their objective; spreading their literature abroad by the army of trained salesmen that always work between the two. And at the same time all important retailers attract the main part of their custom by their continual announcements in the Press.

So by such scientific means a steady stream of useful knowledge is being poured out all the while, stimulating the minds of rival manufacturers, of agents, wholesale houses, retail houses, and public alike. This clarifies thought and speeds up effort.

A speaker in the House of Commons in 1660, talking of merchants in the presence of Charles II, said quaintly but very truly: "They are the laborious bees that bring in honey to your Majesty's hive."

How the honey has increased in volume in the last fifty years, owing to the dynamic quality of advertisement!

## CHAPTER IV

### THE VALUE OF ADVERTISEMENT TO THE CONSUMER

ONE thing is absolutely certain, and that is that the general public do not appreciate in the least the value which advertising has for them. They seem to consider it an entertaining extravagance on the part of business men. They remain childishly unaware of the influence it has upon their own choice and taste and welfare.

Such criticism as they put forward is summed up in the phrase, "Who pays for all this?" And the answer implied is, "We—the public—do."

But broadly speaking, modern scientific advertising more than pays for itself. It is an asset, not an expense. That is to say, it produces such a growth in the volume of business that it saves in the cost of production in the end, and so increases the profit by decreasing the selling costs.

It is unscientific advertising if it does not produce these results.

The cumulative effect of modern advertisement upon the public has been to make them connoisseurs in the matter of commodities. It has filled their minds with knowledge of a peculiarly useful kind. So soon as something new or useful appears upon the market they are made promptly aware of the fact. Consciously and unconsciously they imbibe columns of well-digested information relating to their wants each day. There is no need for them to seek out the names of the makers of foodstuffs, cars, bicycles, pianos, furniture, or the best-known distributors of clothes, tobacco, hats and shoes. The names of all such are *better* known than are the names of England's ruling men. More people can speak knowingly of the various makes of cars upon the market now than could state offhand who sits on the Woolsack, or who is Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Only recently London audiences greeted with roars of wild delight impersonations by Alfred Lester of "Celebrities you have never seen." The names of all the men

he chose were household words through advertising.

And not only do the public know the various brands, but their distinctive features as well. They can distinguish between cheap and costly cars, between English and American cars; they know the look of a Rolls-Royce and a Ford.

Were it not for advertising, no one would know the merits or the names of any goods made or distributed outside the radius of their own locality. Think what that would mean! The limitations that it would impose upon trade! But as it is, persons living in quite isolated places have heard of *and can buy* the same things that are known and used in the centers of trade and population.

Advertisements have made household words of the names and trade-marks of all the best commodities. Retailers, therefore, are anxious to stock these goods, and this *accessibility* is one of the results of advertising of the greatest value to the customer.

When I, as a customer, wish to buy a waterproof coat, a gramophone, an oriental carpet, a

player-piano, or a sewing machine—certain names leap instantly into my mind and certain qualities of style, durability, efficiency or beauty are at once associated with these names. I know exactly where I ought to buy each article, according to the degree of quality I desire.

It is advertisements that have given me this knowledge, and formed associations in my mind which make my judgment sound.

The main consideration of most people's lives is their domestic circle. All kinds of social forces exert pressure upon the family unit nowadays. This pressure is met and circumvented by that thing we term "worldly wisdom." It consists chiefly in having a good working knowledge of the amenities of life. The result of advertising has been to store our minds with useful facts concerning the ordering of our domestic and personal lives. As soon as households ceased to produce, cook, sew, bake, distil for themselves it became imperative that they should be informed as to what centres undertook these various jobs, how they performed them, and in what way they progressed. This organised

distribution of intelligence we call advertisement. Consumers are greatly indebted to this force in that they can eat well, dress well, live in comfortable homes, and order their existence in a methodical and labour-saving way, despite the complexity of modern systems of production and distribution.

As the public grow more conscious of the value of advertisement they will influence its character: at present they accept vague, unpractical announcements without comment, because they do not realise how much useful information is withheld. But as their intelligent interest in these notices increases they will make demands that must be met. Then *all* advertising will become genuinely informative: whereas, at present, too much of it is in the nature of mere reminders that such and such a firm exists.

#### (a) ITS INFLUENCE UPON PRICE

In our crowded modern markets the cost of merchandise would be extremely high were there not some method by which manufacturers and retailers could reach, for the purpose of selling,



one or all classes of society with comparative ease.

The moment a manufacturer makes for the million or sells to the million with success, he can afford to do so at a low margin of profit upon individual transactions. The profit in the bulk, however, represents a considerable sum.

A big London store not long ago sold over a hundred thousand yards of calico in three weeks. A little shop would not have dared to buy so much as two thousand yards. But the big store's advertising was so scientific that there were thousands of people who read its pithy announcements every day. Because through its advertisements it could get into instant touch with so many spenders, because it knew quite well it could dispose of that merchandise in a few weeks with the greatest ease, it could afford to sell the stuff at only two-thirds of the usual price.

The rapidity of the "turnover" of a modern retail business is due entirely to advertising. It can call forth from the highways and hedges in one morning hundreds of people eager to respond to its fresh plans. The public flock to those

stores and shops that show the greatest variety of merchandise—a variety as kaleidoscopic as the plumage of a peacock in the sun.

(b) ITS INFLUENCE UPON TASTE

It has been written: “The man of taste is the man who unhesitatingly knows what is right and what is wrong.” He is the man with a sense of fitness, with a true appreciation of quality.

The influence of advertising upon taste is in the right direction. Very gradually it helps to eliminate the “shoddy,” to raise the standard of “quality” goods, and increase the number of people who will buy nothing but the best.

Every shopkeeper admits to-day that the public taste is on the upward grade, that the educative influence of advertising breeds a fastidious type of mind.

This is what happens. A shoe manufacturer wishes to increase his market. He therefore decides to advertise. But before he embarks upon that expense he makes sure that he is making a shoe of a superior kind. It must be cut from good lasts, be a shoe that keeps its shape, wears

well, looks smart, and has about it an air of distinction.

All these points he puts forth boldly in his advertisements, thus throwing out impressions of what a really good shoe ought to be—impressions that stick in the public's mind. He illustrates his shoes—and the pictures of his shapely footwear become engraven on the public's memory. With the result that many people become dissatisfied with the cheap, unwieldly shoes they usually buy. They aspire to better shoes. So much so that they agree to pay the higher price; and thus *they learn the secret of true economy*—which is always to buy the best that one can.

There are only two ways of surpassing one's competitors to-day. One is to produce the very cheap but *useful* thing, the other to produce the very best that can be made. The market for the former goods always will be the great masses of people who cannot afford, or have not yet learnt to appreciate, the best. The market for the latter will be that ever larger growing section of the community who have good taste.

People with innate or educated taste will never descend to shoddy goods, no matter what their circumstances be. They have one good suit of clothes or one good pair of boots (if they cannot afford any more) rather than three of a second-rate kind. But those retain their shape and distinction of style for several years; whereas the second-rate suit or the cheap pair of shoes have from the very start the appearance of the second-rate, with the added disadvantage that they have to be replaced in a ridiculously short space of time. That is *extravagance*—extravagance that nothing justifies but the most utter penury.

A person who makes it a golden rule always to buy the best spends far less money than his friend who, buying in the cheapest market, has to buy three times to the former's once, in order to look or live as decently. Wherever *durability* is of great account one should buy the most expensive thing. Because durability is the result of good material and fine workmanship—two factors that can never be cheap. But where *beauty* is the main point of consideration it is

different. (And that is another truth too many people fail to understand.) Beauty is chiefly a matter of design, and it costs no more to make a good design in copper than in gold; to contrive a charming pattern for calico than silk. Money, therefore, in such instances, is of far less consequence than judgment or discrimination.

The theme upon which all advertising harps is excellence in some shape or form—serviceableness or good design, or comfort, or utility, or beauty. This constant emphasis upon the note of quality permeates the public mind and sets up standards of refinement unknown to all save the most educated classes two generations ago.

It was Stephen Graham who in his book of travels in America wrote of the significance of motion pictures as an educative force. He saw that they made an appeal, drew out the imagination and emotional capacity of millions of people whose emotions and imagination lay permanently dormant otherwise. And he visualised these people passing on to higher, more æsthetic forms of drama, as their sensibilities grew more acute.

So public taste is ever on the upward tendency; and what motion pictures may do for it in one direction, advertising has accomplished in another.

The more people there are in a community who have good taste, the better that community becomes. The question of taste affects life as a whole—our morals, manners and capacity to rule. Those who see below the surface value of advertisement have realised that it has potentialities of the most educative kind.

### (c) ITS INFLUENCE UPON THE PUBLIC WELFARE

There is one fact that eloquent exponents of the "simple life" ignore. Were, by a miracle, the nation to adopt these tenets wholesale, millions of people would instantly starve.

One piece of legitimate criticism can be made against our modern system of industrialism, coloured as it is by advertising. And that is that it sometimes exerts too much pressure upon demand. Demand, at times, becomes an artificial thing. We could do without so many of the things we are enticed to buy. Such critics rush

to the opposite extreme and uphold the arguments for simple living with more rhetoric than common sense.

But despite all the weakness and vulgarity of trade to-day—its labour problems, its bad organisation, the ugliness and feebleness of its craftsmanship—I honestly believe it will work out its own salvation; and that advertisement is the great tool with which this will be done.

The time will come when nothing will be made that is not good. Things will cost much more, therefore we shall have fewer things. But those who make them will be well paid. We shall look back upon this age as the childhood of industry. Beauty, order, craftsmanship will come out of this plethora of production. But that will not be yet. The economic purpose will have to be realised by slow degrees. Development as the result of general enlightenment is what we need. We may over-produce and over-possess before our powers of discrimination are perfected.

The influence of advertising upon the public welfare lies in its power to raise the standard of

living all round. And there are many people who believe this standard is already ridiculously high. Not their own, mind you; that is always right and proper—but the standard of the classes *below them in the social scale!*

Advertising tends to make us all fastidious (in comparison, that is, with the standards of the past). For, of course, fastidious is not the proper word to use in connection with man's natural love of good clothes, nourishing food, cleanliness, comfort, entertainment.

This force has helped to lessen drudgery. It teaches people to desire better things. It has educated us in many necessary habits of refinement. It has helped to introduce the usages and manners of the cultured few to thousands. Its civilising influence is far too little understood. How many of our habits of cleanliness, how much of the nourishment of our food, are due to the teaching of advertisements! What thousands of pounds we save in doctors' bills because of the simple medicinal remedies we know how and when to use! How seldom is experiment a necessity to-day! *We know. We've been told.*



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Advertising has helped to standardise goods; to socialise manners; to individualise taste. It has beautified dress, democratised luxury. It fosters a healthy spirit of dissatisfaction with anything less than the best.

Some of the effects of its socialising influence are extremely interesting. Certain big business organisations publish exceptionally public-spirited announcements. Such an one is the London Underground Electric Railways Company. This Company has by its advertising tried to foster a healthy love of the open air and the countryside. By means of good posters it has enticed the public to visit London's most entrancing open spaces, Hampton Court, Epping Forest, Kew Gardens, and the Zoo.

The General Omnibus Company has taught people how to cross a crowded thoroughfare, how to hail and how to leave and enter 'busses, how to lessen the chance of accidents. Not long ago it even paid for space to publish a catechism mothers ought to teach their children—the poor little mites whose only playground is the road.

This is *creative advertising*, a mere foreshadow-

ing of the fine uses to which organised publicity will be put in the years to come.

Some people seem to think that we have reached the summit of endeavour. The fact is that we have only just begun. We may fly in the air and move under the sea, so inventive is the modern brain; but we have not yet produced an entirely healthy, prosperous, clear-thinking nation, and until we have done that we have failed!

Advertising is the quickest, most efficient way of accomplishing these ends—because its method is to startle, impress, educate, in the shortest space of time. Should the Board of Health try in a *scientific* way to reduce tuberculosis, by making it imperative that every one should sleep with open windows, it could drive the lesson home to every one in a few days' time. When a few salient, well-tabulated facts concerning illness and fresh air glare at every man and woman in big type from the pages of their favourite journal for a week, more than a suspicion would be left in their minds that those facts were *true*. They would then begin to act; and bit by bit the windows in cottages, villas, tenement

buildings and servants' attics would open wider to the good fresh air, until every one lay with a healthy breeze fanning his face as he slept.

Habit—that is all.

Advertising has fostered more good habits than any other force. This statement is made without qualification of any kind.

## CHAPTER V

### THE TECHNIQUE OF ADVERTISING

**I**N all the arts and crafts one can find workmen with passionate sincerity of purpose but too little technical skill, and others with excellent technique but with little genuine inspiration. The giants are those whose work combines both the creative element and superlatively good technique.

That, therefore, is the advertiser's goal; because the principles of art, it will be found, are the principles of life in all its various phases.

Millet wrote of art that it was sincerity of feeling that alone could raise it to the heights. He put the tricks of the palette in their proper place—made them the servants of his soul.

It is a strange thing that while nearly all of the literature on advertisement is obsessed with the question of technique, yet it is on this point that

advertising can be severely criticised. Advertisers, on the whole, are entirely sincere in their feelings towards advertising. They have a most religious faith in its potentiality, enthusiasm of an exalted kind. In that respect they certainly live up to Millet's standard. Yet their technique remains extremely bad. It is this ugliness, this poverty of method that jars so much on men and women of educated sensibilities. Still, the main qualification for good work is uppermost—sincerity—a truth our critics should not forget. Technique is a matter of training; it can be acquired.

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It is my intention to treat the question of technique only in a very general way. I am anxious to view advertising as a force in relation to life, rather than in its relation to commerce alone. I believe commercial advertising is but a stepping-stone to methods of organised publicity which will affect all sorts of questions other than trade.

I advise my business readers to turn to other books if they would learn of the technique of

publicity in its most detailed form. I read these books with admiration, they are excellently compiled; but sometimes I leave them feeling that a man can get as far with much belief and a little common sense as he will get if he masters this mass of detailed knowledge presented to him second-hand with such laborious pains.

Advertising, to me, is a matter of faith, of taste, and *lastly* of training. We need first a lively appreciation of the power and possibilities of scientific distribution, then we can go to the expert to give the right expression to our ideas. Distribution is not work for the amateur to do. It is passing every day into the hands of men who have specialised in the intricate art of making known.

The art of advertising lies in presenting facts *attractively*, in placing knowledge before the public in such a way that they are impressed. A good advertisement acts on one's mind always in the same way. A perfectly orderly process of thought is set in motion. It attracts, creates interest, kindles desire, convinces, and impels action.

Posters are reminders; they must make an instantaneous appeal. In Press advertisements the force of the appeal may be prolonged, and should, to some extent, be educative.

Two things govern the attractive presentation of plain facts—they are Matter and Manner, or Copy and Display.

### (a) MATTER

The Matter is chosen as the result of analysis. The advertiser is not concerned with the inventor's, or the maker's, or the retailer's point of view, but solely with that of those who buy. He says to himself—Why is this thing good? Where is it superior to others of its kind? What class of folk will fancy it, and why? Why should *I* buy this thing? Is it beautiful, entertaining, luxurious, cheap, decorative, nourishing or utilitarian? By an imaginative effort he puts himself in another's place, sees the merchandise in its appropriate surroundings. Then he decides what are its most saleable points; tabulates them, and chooses those (one only, sometimes) likely to make the strongest selling appeal.

The maker of an article is inclined to see it solely in relation to the technical difficulties he or the inventor has been able to overcome. The advertising man does not trouble about these; he views the finished article from the imaginative viewpoint of the crowd. He invokes in the public mind the idea, the judgment, that always precedes the act of spending. "Say what you mean and mean what you say," is a truism among good advertisement writers. In short, don't be a humbug; don't strive after effect. Be honest, simple and concise.

Many of the best advertising men have been drawn from the ranks of journalists and salesmen. The former have versatility and the gift of graphic, terse description; the latter can analyse the conditions governing diverse sales.

### (b) MANNER

Having selected one's matter the next step is to treat it in the manner most suited to its character. And it is here that advertisement too often lacks perfection of style.

There are three main questions to consider—



Phraseology, Pictorial Construction, and Typographical display. (Other lesser considerations are bound up with these.) In this lies true advertising technique—an immense subject to understand. It includes a knowledge of three different crafts, and a man can devote a lifetime's study to each one—the craft of the writer, the craft of the draughtsman, and that of the expert in typography and lettering.

No wonder we are nowhere near perfection yet!

Until all copy writers know how to *write*, until business men pay proper artists proper sums of money for good work, until we rid advertisement of its plethora of types—it will remain third-rate in its technique.

In good advertisement art and business must co-operate. One calls in the artist in words or design, colour or type, to give expression to a definite idea. All the advertising that stands to-day planes above the mediocre stuff, shows the quality that only a person with artistic feeling can give to his work.

Art is a word that business men distrust, and

an artist has a viewpoint that often they do not understand. Yet it is essential to all advertising that it should embrace the principles of art, which alone produce the element of *quality*.

It is quite true that however good the writer or the pictorial artist, he must attune his work to the subject in hand. But the advertising man should lead him gently in the right direction, encouraging him to harmonise as much as possible his artistic faith with the commercial end in view. And what he must not do is to pull the artist's work about until it has lost every vestige of that *quality* which made it good.

There was a time when I believed (a common belief, I am told) that art meant "prettiness," elaboration. I know better than that to-day. One of its great governing principles is summed up in the word—restraint; and restraint, economy of method, is of supreme importance in advertisement. A good writer can make a statement in ten words where a bad one needs twenty. A good pictorial artist works up a vivid little sketch in a few clean strokes where a bad one presents a laboured mass of unnecessary detail.

When an artist's work is first-rate it is always vivid and sincere. When a man understands the secret of simplicity he has learnt the secret of forcefulness.

Now every one of these qualities belongs to the good advertisement, which must be forceful, simple, vivid, sincere. There is the closest fellowship, therefore, between the artist and the advertising man as far as technique is concerned.

The most pernicious nonsense is written upon the subject of advertising copy by ignorant advertising men. Not long ago there was an article in a well-known advertising journal on the subject of publicity and literature. The writer dared to say that there was no connection between the two, since selling copy needed "logic, forcefulness and brevity of phrasing," while "literary polish almost demanded redundancy of verbiage in its accomplishment."

The *one* thing that literature avoids is redundancy of style. The greatest writers have always been those who could pack a world of meaning into a simple phrase. The truth is, such critics do not understand what good writing

signifies. They have the common notion that it implies exceptionally flowery language and the use of strange fantastic words. Shakespeare, most adaptable of men, and coiner of forceful phrases that have been quoted for four hundred years, could have compiled incomparable advertisements.

Selling copy is influenced by the question of space; but the same rules hold good in whatever form the written word is used. One must avoid the ready-made phrase, negative statements and unfamiliar words. One must get the point of emphasis in every sentence in the proper place. Rhythm, punctuation, clean-cut, vivid phraseology should characterise advertisements no less than literature. For clear thinking compels clear writing, and it is this clarity of idea that is the essence of publicity.

I have learnt, or, I should say, am still learning, the profound principles that govern art, and I study with great deference the creed that makes the genuine artist (no matter what the medium he employs) the most exacting, conscientious of all workers.

Few business institutions have used the work of pictorial artists with more intelligence than the London Underground Electric Railways Company. The Advertising Manager has employed draughtsmen and colourists of great skill for the poster work that reminds the travelling public of lovely places within reach. This advertising has got right away from the stilted, second-rate productions of its kind. One feels the artists have expressed *themselves* as well as emphasised the convenience of the Underground. The result is joyous, arresting pictures that urge one not to miss those Queen's Hall concerts or the tulips in full bloom at Kew. The two famous maps they published by that clever artist, MacDonald Gill, were the jolliest, most constructive bits of poster advertising yet produced.

Colour and black-and-white illustrations for advertisements are infinitely better than they used to be; but again the work that is vivid in one's memory is that of people who have learnt their craft in art schools, not in business institutions.

The third technique an advertising man must understand is that of typography. Again the

master key to success is simplicity—restraint. The main idea at present seems to be to mix as many different kinds as possible, until the filled space literally dances with confused effects. The logic of excellent copy is lost in the razzle-dazzle of type. Gothic lettering is used for the titles of merchandise of an ultra-modern kind; and heavily leaded headings do their very utmost to upset the balance of elaborate displays.

Now the value of good type in advertising is that it *invites* reading. Being a carrier of thought it can hasten or retard the action of the reader's mind. Type, properly used, enables one to grasp a fact with the least amount of fatigue. It has the closest, most sympathetic relationship to the idea expressed. A clever manipulator of type can make it serve the purpose of publicity with a forcefulness that the uninitiated always feel but seldom *understand*. He makes it serve *his* purpose, not merely display itself. He loathes eccentric forms of type because of their obtrusiveness. They jerk the reader's attention away from the central idea. The types he tries to use for the forceful state-

ment of plain facts are of simple, vigorous design, good to look at, easy to read, most inviting to the eye. They are types that lend themselves to the furtherance of his argument in an infinitely fuller sense than that of merely clothing words in print. Type as a medium for the expression of ideas can be lifeless, even incongruous, when set up by a printer who does not understand its subtle influence; but used by a skilled advertising man it furnishes the quickest, clearest, cleanest, most forceful means of impressing facts on busy or lethargic minds. Typography for him is a species of argument in itself; he makes it give emphasis to his facts; and the more he understands its purpose the more he avoids fantastic, "decorative" types and lettering.

This keen appreciation of a most important medium is the thing the average business man does not understand. If he did he would insist upon his printed literature being planned and set up by an advertising expert before going to press. For he has mastered the *purpose* of type; he appreciates the many ways in which it can be made to give distinction, fitness, not only to

books but to phrases, titles, trade-marks, letter headings.

When we are all more sensitive to type the public will respond more quickly to the printed word. At present quite two-thirds of all the information placed before them is ignored, or only half assimilated. With printed matter, long before the mind can be impressed, *the eye must be invited*. How many people remember this? If words are to be read easily they must be simply clothed; if facts are to be remembered the *sight* as well as the *sense* of them will help.

It seems to me that advertising has given type a new significance; or rather it has made us realise that it has not only beauty but strength.

\* \* \* \* \*

There are several minor points of technique that improve advertisement display, making it "fit for use." I shall only touch upon them here to show how much there is for us to learn before becoming master-craftsmen in lay-out.

There is the question of the composition of printed matter on a page, the relation of masses of type to each other, to the margins, to the



space as a whole. There is the question of dissimilar shapes which may be pleasing or distracting according as they are arranged—the problem of balance in other words. There is the question of emphasis, and that of the use and abuse of ornament and decoration, and the choice of colour.

Whole books have been written upon these points alone. They are the little things that have such an important influence on the *ensemble*—questions of detail that no expert advertiser can afford to overlook.

It is just because so many fascinating subjects have a bearing upon advertisement display that all kinds of clever, original craftsmen are to-day making their careers in the versatile field of advertisement.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE NATURE OF ADVERTISING GENIUS

**W**HEN we pay a little more attention to the idiosyncrasies of human beings the work of the world will be better done. The constructive genius will be allowed to do the work best fitted to a pioneer. The administrative type will be put into the niche most suited to his absorbing love of systems. The plodder will be left to plod in his quiet, inimitable way. The artist will be urged to create; the imitator asked to reproduce, as conscientiously as he knows how. Men with executive ability, with the talent for organisation, will not do henchmen's work. "Official" minds and legal minds will immerse themselves in formulæ until they are faultlessly symbolical of the traditions they uphold.

In fact, men will do the work that their mentality is fitted for. That, and training, will be

the test. Our present haphazard squeezing of square pegs into round holes will be found unscientific—wasteful.

Now where in this gamut of ability do we find the advertising genius? What are the particular mental attributes he needs?

We get the answer to this question by defining what he does.

The advertising man is an interpreter *par excellence*. His business it is to exhibit, to defend other people's work. He must have marked versatility, because he is concerned with the popularisation of so many different things. He must grasp the significance of facts at a glance. His sympathies must be so broad, his perception so acute that he can pass on his vivid impressions to his fellow men in such a way that the most sluggish imagination is stirred. What other people cannot say about themselves or what concerns them, the advertising man is there to say. What he has enjoyed he would make others enjoy; what he believes he would have other people believe. The ideal advertising man should be a socialising genius. He is pleader at the bar of public opin-

ion, able to present a case to the community in a manner at once striking, convincing and true.

When the third part of this book is read it should be understood why I claim so much for advertising men—not as they are, *but as they must become*. At present they have but to adapt themselves to the outlook of the business world. Here and there advertising has been used for other, still more important, purposes, but not sufficiently yet to influence in any marked degree the advertiser's attitude of mind.

The advertising which the world has seen in the last two generations is nothing compared with what must come. It is crude and primitive to a degree, despite its potency. The fight for the proper recognition of advertisement will include the recognition of the special mental attributes of its exponents. The world will not trust the interpretation of its great ideas to any one not big enough to be in sympathy with its noblest, most progressive plans. If I thought that advertising was never to do even more than all that I have said it does, I should not make these claims. But it could do, is going to do, so infinitely more,

that it is worth while trying to define what relation an ideal exponent of the profession would hold to the society which he serves.

A writer in *Vanity Fair* once said, "The forcing of an appeal is a psychological study, a highly developed science." It is all that and more. It is the very essence of success that the advertising man should look at everything, from bread to boots and from furniture to soap, with that uncommon "commonsense" which re-interprets them for the crowd. His attitude of mind, his sincerity of purpose, is of more importance than his knowledge of technique. His ability to grasp essentials, his vitality and generous outlook, is of greater consequence than his copy-writing or design.

Some men there are who have a tonic effect upon their fellows. They revitalise their mental faculties, and clarify their vision in the most extraordinary way. They have a healthy appreciation of all the manifestations of man's activity. Such stimulating personalities make good advertising men. For there are people who have specialised so much they have everything else to

learn. This is true of the heads of many great firms. They boast that it has taken them twenty-five years to learn their job. It probably has, with the result that *in matters of detail* they know it very well. But to all those external elements that have such an influence upon results they are usually blind and deaf—insensitive. It is a recognised fact that in every sphere little improvements come from within and big improvements from without. It is with those big improvements that an advertising genius is concerned. His is the *rôle* of onlooker—that onlooker who sees most of the game.

The advertising man to-day cannot be too well educated in the proper sense of the word. Any knowledge that will give him a quick appreciation of the activities of the modern world is valuable. With every day that passes there are fewer questions that may not, at any moment, come within his range of vision. He cannot be too imaginative, nor yet too practical—a dual excellence very difficult to find. The more he knows about good writing, design and typography the better. He must at least be a good critic of these things. He

will require the broadest sympathies and the keenest powers of perception. He needs a thorough knowledge of all the ramifications of business in its productive, retail and wholesale stages. He must be unafraid of ideas—his own and other people's. He must love teaching. He must have sound æsthetic tastes. He must know how to handle words and people, as well as goods. He must see the activities of the world as one great harmonious whole, and find “the top of the fulness of life” in fusing scientifically as many varied interests as he can. He must have the most exacting standard of honour. He must be able to digest facts like a lawyer, and present a case like a barrister. He must have an almost uncanny gift for first arousing curiosity and then satisfying reason with sound argument. He must be optimistic. He must have a stimulating personality. He must be able both to feel and see the *significance* of things.

In short his is a composite faculty, embracing the talents and mental attributes of many different types. This universality is his particular strength. Add this to a sense of the dramatic

and one has the basic qualities of a good advertising man. The rest is training and experience.

The advertising of to-day foreshadows such important developments that only men with big minds and the reformer's spirit, real sincerity of purpose and dynamic energy, will be competent to deal with the new phases of advertisement, and so make this force what it ought to be—the greatest force in the world.



## CHAPTER VII

### SERVICE AND THE MODERN ADVERTISING AGENCY

**T**HE most complete understanding of what scientific distribution means to-day is centred in the modern Advertising Agency. A first-class service agency is a marvellously equipped power-house for the generation of ideas which will educate or sell.

If one wished to enlighten some one as to the nature and function of advertising, one would not introduce him to an Advertising Manager. He is a man charged with the management of the advertising of a particular firm, or given control of the advertising columns of a newspaper. That is extremely important work—but specialised, limited to one locality. Such a manager's activities are not spread over the whole gamut of advertisement. That is the privilege of the

Advertising Agency—a centre staffed and organised to deal with advertising in its every phase. So if I describe a modern agency I am describing the functioning of scientific distribution in its completest form, up-to-date.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was a time when an agent was merely a broker in newspaper space. He bought it by columns, lengths and inches at a special price, and sold it again to advertisers, quite regardless of its value for the particular end in view, for as much as he could get.

This soulless, uncreative “jobbing” was bound to defeat its own ends. Such agents work in a backwater to-day. They do not represent agency work in its modern, enlightened form.

As far as the question of remuneration goes, a variety of methods are adopted to-day by advertising men. Some give their services to the advertiser free and take the rebates, discounts and allowances the newspaper offers them as their fee. Others work on what is called a “split commission” basis. They share with the advertiser the rebates and discounts offered by the Press.

Others, a mere handful, get clear away from the idea that the media should pay them at all. They work for the advertiser, so they look to the advertiser for their reward—not to the newspaper, which is merely a plank in their scheme. They pass on to the advertiser all the commission they receive, and then charge him a proper fee—either a lump sum for the preparation and conduct of some particular campaign, or so much per annum, no matter how much or how little is spent.

This is the only logical, straightforward basis on which an agent can work to-day. It leaves him unbiassed; it eliminates any feeling on the client's part that his agent is persuading him to spend more money in order that his commission shall be increased. The client knows exactly what he has to pay; he need not fear that the agent is cutting prices behind his back. By this method, if his service is inadequate or unsuccessful, the advertiser cancels the arrangement and the agent pays for his own incompetence.

When space brokerage is entirely abolished advertising agents will have put their profession

on to an infinitely higher plane. For “no man can serve two masters”—the medium and the advertiser. To work for the latter and get paid by the former is the most illogical, unsatisfactory position ever contrived—particularly unworthy of the business world.

This straightening out of the method whereby an advertising agent is paid for his work follows naturally upon the new definition of what he is there to do.

So long as he existed merely to sell space, he was such an unimportant, uncreative type of middleman that no one cared very much how he managed his affairs. But the moment he began to function in a broad, responsible way as a real creator of advertisements, as adviser to business firms, his status became professional, and his influence so great that his position had to be defined.

We see him now the head of an organisation that has specialised in scientific distribution and all that it implies. This organisation is staffed by experts, equipped with up-to-date machinery for the carrying out of great educative sales cam-

paings. The motto of the modern advertising agency is Service. It is organised to perform the skilled distribution of all forms of intelligence; to sell, to teach, to originate ideas. It buys newspaper space at advantageous terms, writes, illustrates, prepares advertisements, knowing how to get the greatest effect in the smallest amount of space. It checks the appearance of these advertisements, keeping a complete record of every client's transactions; relieving him of arduous details; securing for him reasonable credit from the Press, and guaranteeing to the Press payment of accounts. It plans great marketing schemes; originates trade-marks; suggests effective designs for packages, labels, wrappers, &c.—designs so simple yet so distinguished that, once seen, they are remembered, which makes it easier for customers to get and recognise the goods. It selects salesmen for its clients, and shows them how to sell goods quickly; how to speed up their delivery system; how to design good window displays. An agency knows everything about the cost, tone and circulation of all the big metropolitan dailies, weekly newspapers,

of the monthly and quarterly magazines and reviews, of the important provincial and class journals. It originates methods whereby the trade is interested in new products, and it executes original selling schemes. It compiles, writes and illustrates catalogues, leaflets, booklets; designs posters; knows all about block, electro and stereo making, type, lay-out and lettering. In short, it can offer expert assistance to any and every kind of firm, directing their salesmanship in such a way that distribution and production are increased while the cost of both is lessened, because all waste—whether of money, energy or time—is made to disappear.

These are its surface, better-known activities. Its influence, however, is more far-reaching still. There is a subtle creativeness and conscientiousness about the first-class advertising agency which the outsider cannot detect. The most enlightened advertising men do not believe their work is finished with the appearance of a striking series of announcements in the Press. *The idea behind the advertising has to penetrate the minds of all connected with the product and its distribu-*

*tion.* The sales staff are all brought into the scheme. They are given a better understanding of the merchandise; their imagination is aroused. They are made perfectly familiar with the analysis their advertising manager has made of the article in question and the conditions governing its sale. (The analysis this manager has passed on to the advertising agent, who in turn has passed it on, in more congenial form, to the public in the columns of the Press.) No one is left out in a big educational campaign, not even the retailer. So all take a greater interest in the merchandise, handle it with more intelligence, get more pleasure out of their work—which not only helps to create the demand but *to maintain it*.

I think the advertising agent's finest work lies here. The moment the idea of *unity* creeps into business, every thread is strengthened, and no one feels his personal effort is spent in vain. Such thoroughness not only shows the honesty of modern advertising but a profound belief in its power to harmonise—adjust. It does far more than eliminate waste; it dissipates friction as well. For the modern agency understands the

influence that publicity has on the general efficiency of a firm. It knows that in glorifying advertising as the trump card in scientific distribution, one has always to be careful to keep the horse before the cart, the goods before the advertisement; to allow that the effect follows the cause. In other words, advertisement is not an all-powerful selling force to-day if the thing advertised is bad, if the organisation behind the commodity falls short of the advertiser's claims. The most brilliantly conceived announcements have but a fleeting success if they are not truthful statements; if the service as well as the goods does not reach the standard of excellence claimed; and if the staff are not as familiar with and keen about the merchandise, the advertising, and the ideas of the executive as the managing director is himself. As "Callisthenes" has written: "Advertisement, however brilliantly arresting, will not sell fraudulent merchandise over a long period of time, because publicity has an excellent trick of revealing defects as well as virtues, the superficial as well as the profound.



The more limelight it throws upon an individual, an idea, or commodity, the more each has to live up to the reputation that has been acquired."

Some people say that "fortunes have been made by advertising." That, strictly speaking, is not true. For, first, there must be something good to sell, and, secondly, the plant, the staff, and the service concerned with the production and distribution of these goods must be well organised. It is all this combined that makes fortunes for keen business men.

More and more do advertisers realise the huge responsibilities that advertising brings. With every day that passes the influence of advertising goes further back to the fountain head, colouring not only every little detail in the administration of a firm, but the thought and health and faculties of every person in its employ. Now this is one of the most significant points about publicity, because instantly we see that, properly employed, it makes in the truest sense of the word for scientific distribution. The *morality* of this great force becomes at once apparent. It introduces

salesmanship of a more intelligent kind, makes it extremely conscientious, thorough to the nth degree.

On page 95 I touched upon the influence that an advertising expert has on the plans of an executive body. Now we will see in greater detail just why this is so.

We will suppose the maker of some excellent commodity, called for the moment X, comes to an advertising agency with the idea of having a great national campaign for the purpose of making X known. Mr. A. is the advertising expert; Mr. B. the business man. Mr. A. examines the product, makes himself familiar with all that it is supposed to do, is given proof of its excellence, is told the sum of money that Mr. B. proposes to spend in furthering the reputation of the goods he has so much at heart. Once Mr. A. possesses all of this knowledge it is comparatively easy for him to draw up a series of arresting announcements on behalf of X. Behind him there is a staff skilled in producing advertisements of all kinds—masters of typography, specialists in design and illustration. Their ingenuity is trained

to give an air of distinction, purpose, to every bit of print they touch. But Mr. A. is an enthusiast; he has the delight of a genuine artist in his work, a keen sense of fitness, a conscience of exacting rectitude. So he says to Mr. B., "So far, so good. But what sort of salesmen do you possess? Have they been educated in their merchandise? Are they with you in this scheme? Have you told them anything about it? Shown them how to handle the goods? Taught them the arguments in their favour? And your delivery system—is it sound, quick, accurate, reliable? How are you going to pack these goods? Will the impression the wrapper, tin or bottle makes live up to the goods themselves? We have touched upon hygiene in the advertisement. What hygiene reforms have you thought fit to make in the factory where this commodity is made? Have you asked your salesmen what counter arguments they receive about your goods when on the road? And so the conversation proceeds between Mr. A. and Mr. B., both enthusiasts over the wise distribution of X.

And very soon Mr. A. is asked to address the selling staff on the subject of the coming campaign, and perhaps three or four hundred salesmen are for the first time asked to co-operate in the plans of Mr. B.'s firm—made eager, critical, given food for thought. And the delivery system is overhauled, and improvement wrought in various instances, so that the words Immediate Delivery are able to appear on the X announcements in that bold type which suggests deeds as well as words. The firm, in fact, finds that there are hundreds of administrative details that have a direct and most important bearing upon its advertising undertaken with so much zest by Mr. A. And so, in time, through the agency of advertising, the management of this great firm is bettered in every way. All sorts of points are analysed that never received attention before; and the human element, *on which everything must ultimately rest*, is given its fair share of consideration.

There is no end to the improvement in salesmanship that can be wrought along these lines. A reasonable yearly appropriation for advertise-

ment practically forces such reforms. For when the results of a big campaign come to be examined, it is sometimes found that the organisation behind the scenes has not been so efficient as the advertising. Business has been disappointing because the co-operation between all the forces at work has been loose, inadequate, not harmonious enough.

Here lies a new field for the advertising expert. He will refuse to touch the advertising of a firm which is not thoroughly conscientious in all of its plans. For modern advertising cannot stand alone as a selling force in industry. It is but a weapon wielded on behalf of distribution when it is highly organised.

It is practically impossible to find a firm run on scientific lines (there are not very many of them yet) that has not done something notable in the way of publicity (even though it may never have used the Press), or in efficient technical administration, or in staff management. One thing leads to another: that force which makes active the greatest numbers of improvements is organised publicity. Its effect, when it is per-

manent, conscientious and original, is altogether dynamic. Properly used it makes it impossible for an executive to remark complacently, "Let well alone." For there is no "well" in such a case; the organisation is forever on the upward grade. A good advertising man is crammed full of ideas for the more efficient management of individual firms. It is all in his province, because, once one gets beneath the surface idea of publicity, one sees that no advertising can be good that is not in close touch with administrative details; otherwise it is hollow, superficial, a sham.

Mr. A. is always concerned with the psychological effect of all that he does. He shies at publishing facts about the delicacy of X, however delicate in essence it may be, if X appears packed in such a manner that its outward appearance makes no appeal to persons of delicate taste. He dislikes hygienic arguments about Y, however truly hygienic is its composition, if the workers in the factory where it is produced work under conditions that wreck their health, or the people responsible for its sale have but the vaguest

notion of what the word hygiene means. And if Z is a commodity that must be delivered instantly to be worth while, the dispatching rooms, the manners and agility of truckmen, the fleet of motors at the service of the firm, and their appearance on the road, all loom questioningly in his active mind, and make him more than ever conscious of the firm's imperative need to keep good faith in every particular with the customers that *his* publicity has won.

This is a part of scientific distribution.

One can make nothing properly known if it is not excellent throughout. In other words, advertisement is ineffectual if not backed by an efficient firm. For this reason no advertising expert does his best work if he is not given the full confidence of the executive. All must work together to get superlatively good results; because harmonious co-operation, no matter what the sphere of activity may be, is the secret of success.

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An immense number of business firms never deal with the general public at all and often do

not use the Press for their publicity. Their market is "the trade"; or, perhaps, it is the professional world—the most difficult of all to reach. Of what use is the advertising man to them? How can his ideas affect their distribution? Make it more scientific than it is?

Following on what has just been written, it is easy to see that he has a use because he is a man with ideas. His work, as we have said, does not begin and end with printed announcements in the Press. His lively imagination and keen sense of psychology help him to view all sorts of situations in a novel light. He is a consultant for all forms of organic weakness in the business world.

But the distributing problem of those manufacturers who do not sell their commodities direct to the public, or who do not use publicity in the ordinary way, is often far more difficult than that of firms who can approach the buying public by dramatic announcements in the Press. They are the makers of such things as steel cables, steamships, rope, essential oils, drugs for dispensing purposes, surgical instruments, building materials, optical lenses, dentists' supplies, asbestos,



tubing—anything, in fact, *not* sold to the everyday buying community under a trade-marked name. A great deal of ingenuity is needed to gain the attention of the harassed traders and overworked professional men who buy such articles as these. Here the quick-wittedness of the advertising expert is taxed to its fullest extent; and in this field much of the future development of advertising will be seen.

And why? Because the advertising expert has a highly developed sense of psychology, and psychology, the modern world has learnt, is the chief factor in salesmanship. Yet it is a thing to which the average business man seldom gives a thought. He makes a thing or buys a thing and then tries to dispose of it as quickly as he can. But the rapidity of his turnover depends upon his salesmanship; and the excellence of his salesmanship depends upon the effect *that every detail in its process makes upon the public mind.*

Here we see an altogether novel demonstration of publicity as a selling force. It is the business man's objective to create a favourable attitude of mind in others when they see or hear

about his goods. Competition is so fierce to-day that this is not an easy thing to do. He needs a tremendous sense of *fitness* if he is not to make mistakes. If his customers are professional men he will need to approach them in such a way that the prejudices of the professional mind are not inflamed. If he is selling something of value an *impression* of value must be diffused at every stage of the process of its sale. His package must *look* valuable; his staff must handle all his stuff as though it had more than ordinary worth. His very premises must have an atmosphere of unusual watchfulness. If his is a firm of considerable prestige and his appeal is to be made in a quarter where prestige is a *sine quâ non*—to a government, for instance, or a municipality—then his letters must, by their phraseology, their presentation, their type, their paper, convey the idea of dignity and worth by every possible means. He must know the value of type, how to use it so that it will *emphasize* the idea he is trying to convey. (See page 78.) If he would approach a class of customers whose attention is

proverbially hard to catch because they are extremely harassed men of affairs, he must show by the method he elects to use that he is fully conscious of the value of their time. And if his public is the passer by his problem is chiefly how to evolve a series of distinctive window-displays that first catch the eye, then charm the fancy, and finally convey a definite idea—as of the scrupulous cleanliness of a dairyman's shop, or the cosy, while-away-just-half-an-hour impression that a five o'clock *rendezvous* for tea should suggest.

Now it takes the average business man all his time to run his business; he has little left over for the study of psychology as a selling force. He knows nothing of the individuality of type, and the phraseology of his business literature is usually primitive in the extreme. He knows little of the pitfalls of design, or how to make the shape of his bottles or the colouring and pattern of his wrappers or labels help to sell his goods. He has not yet learnt that hundreds of repeat orders are gained largely by the manner in which

the goods are packed. Yet all of these points are of infinite importance in the distribution of commodities to-day.

The imaginative viewpoint is a practical viewpoint; but in business, as a rule, it is peculiar to the advertising man. He spends his life learning how to give the full and particular measure of distinction to the presentation of all commodities about which his advice is asked. Each one has a flavour, quality or atmosphere essentially its own. That must be so handled in every stage of its distribution that an instantaneous impression is made which materially helps its sale. Just as Granville Barker taught the stage how to produce fine plays, so an advertising expert can show men who manufacture for the trade or the professions, or business men who do not use the Press, how to exploit their fine discoveries. Barker did not always write the plays; but he dressed and lighted them, harmonized conflicting interests, produced an *ensemble* that was vivid and sincere and stuck fast in the memory of all who saw the performance. The advertising expert could not make a drug, and the construction of a ship or a surgi-

cal instrument has for him the same enchanting wonderment as for the ordinary lay mind. But he can grasp their utility, and see in an instant the right interplay between the makers and the users of these things; while his training as an interpreter of the amenities of life makes it easy for him to devise the best means whereby they can be made known.

All this shows how infinitely varied is the work of an advertising agency that is up to date. It is as much concerned with the practical administration of a business as with the publication of its advertisements. In short, it tackles the problem of distribution in a most thoroughgoing way. Very few firms can afford a private publicity organisation of a sufficiently versatile kind. For a modern agency is staffed with many divers types of mind—men with imagination, but no sense of detail; others with a genius for execution in its minutest form; men who can write terse, entertaining copy after a glance at a few cold facts; artists who can illustrate with pen and brush in a vivid, original way; men who can analyse sale conditions; others who understand something of

the designer's, the block-maker's, the compositor's, the type-founder's, and the editor's job; qualified accountants; compilers of catalogues; advertising journalists; men highly versed in the art of salesmanship. And over them all the master-mind of the inspired Interpreter.

Hence we have the machinery for the most skilled distribution of publicity—no matter what the form; one of the most interesting workshops one could find. A baker puts a lump of sickly-looking dough into an oven, and it comes out later a crisp, shapely loaf of bread. So one puts some vague items of intelligence into the possession of such an agency, and its personnel will promptly charge them with vitality, impress them on the public mind.

To what great ends might not this machinery be used other than for selling merchandise? I shall give the answer to this question in the third part of this book.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE POSSIBILITY OF BUSINESS LITERATURE

**I**T is extraordinarily interesting to realize how progressive firms tend to produce more and more printed literature in the furtherance of their ends. In the commercial world the old-fashioned news sheets previously mentioned seem to be making their *début* in fresh guises every day. For there are many ways of gaining publicity other than by advertisements in the columns of the Press.

Every firm, could it only realise the fact, has a fascinating story to tell the world. No matter how technical, it need not be dry; no matter how practical, it can be written in a lively way. That story well told, whether in the guise of a catalogue issued to the general public, or of a house organ issued to other firms, helps to exploit goods in a better, because more imaginative, manner. It

leaves a delightful impression upon the reader's mind. "Here," he says, "is a firm that is human, very much alive; a firm with a purpose more substantial, more ethically sound, than that of mechanical profit-making." Modern firms give that imaginative touch to their printed matter which focusses the sympathetic attention of public and trade alike upon all they do. The full realisation by the business world of the part that words and type and colour can play in stimulating its activities will revolutionise its status among men of affairs.

At present only a handful of the most progressive business men recognise the value of that thing called "psychological effect." The average piece of business literature is still absolutely dead. It is a stereotyped production couched in set phrases, buried in a tomb of type, lacking both originality and distinction. Because the psychological effect of such rubbish is ignored, the bulk of the circulars, catalogues, leaflets and letters showered upon the heads of firms and the heads of households hardly receive a glance. A fat wastepaper basket sits beside the writing table



of every business man, stuffed always with the literature issued by other firms. Yet he seldom pauses to ask himself, "Is that the reception *my* circulars receive?" Thousands of pounds are still wasted every year in this mechanical production and distribution of commercial news. Because the editing of a leaflet, the compilation of a catalogue, even the writing of a business letter, is an art. Practically all of the business literature that is "lively," distinguished, interesting and, therefore, kept for reference, is done by advertising men. They have a *flair* for that sort of work; it is part of their function as interpreters of ideas. Only someone who has seen an advertising agency prepare a brochure, design the heading for some letter paper, or choose the colouring and type for the cover of a book, can fully understand how very specialized all work of this nature has become. It is a craft of its own, only mastered after years of training and experiment. The old-fashioned business man collects the dry facts relating to his business and sends these to his printer to be set up in type, neither thinking of or knowing anything about

those points of style that could keep his production out of the wastepaper basket of its recipient and place it in a handy place for reference at the proper time.

Now that is not a printer's job, but that of the advertising man. He is to the printer what the architect is to the builder. He must present him with a *plan*. Most printers have a quantity of type, but little knowledge of how to use it. They seem to think that the arrangement of type in the "stick" is all they need to do. They do not understand that type has individuality, and that it can be made to act in the most friendly way on behalf of the idea to be put into print.

I have asked the head of more than one firm if he would ever have the courage to sit down and read his catalogue from cover to cover, and what special reasons he had for thinking that people even less interested than he himself should be intrigued by it on sight. A look of horrible uncertainty crept over the face of each of my friends when I questioned them like this. . . .

Business literature more than any other kind of printed matter depends for nearly all its po-

tency upon its *appearance*, its dress. Whether it is read or not rests with the instant effect it makes as it catches the recipient's eye. Whether it is convincing or not rests with the amount of truth and personality that lies behind its arguments.

This editing of business literature is a most important part of the service an advertising man can render to industry to-day. His job, as I have said, does not begin and end with Press advertisement. It includes the supervision of every scrap of printed matter issued by a firm. The most progressive firms have learnt this lesson. They will not even design a show-card without an advertising expert's advice. They know he can give a touch of quality—distinction to the printed word that has a market value very difficult to define.

I once saw the rough drafts of a catalogue for window curtains compiled by an expert "just for fun." Had any firm printed it, all who saw it must have forever associated curtains and the decoration of windows with its name. It gave a little history of windows—how they had evolved

and why; and a biography of the curtain, its purpose both from the hygienic and æsthetic point of view. There were delightful little sketches showing various "period" windows and the manner in which they were clothed; so that if one had a Tudor house one chose curtains in keeping with its style, and if one lived in a Georgian mansion the tall windows were also suitably clothed. There were all sorts of suggestions for modern window curtains accompanied by snippets of the material proposed, its width, washable qualities, price and range of colouring. There were hints as to the laundering of muslin curtains; the pros and cons of curtain linings were discussed; the proper hanging of curtains explained. There was not a pitfall regarding the clothing of windows that was not touched upon. It was all pithily expressed, and to the point. It would have given the impression that Messrs. So-and-So were not merely anxious to sell yards of material, pairs of curtains by the gross, but that there was nothing they did not know first about windows and then window-decoration, no way in which they could not help one to gain the best

effect. No woman would have thrown the little catalogue away; it was not only too attractive, it told her so much she did not know.

Catalogues that manufacturers circulate among the trade can be treated in just the same way; only here the trade point of view would be emphasised as was the housewife's in the instance I have quoted. The firm that is self-consciously trying to excel can get that impression of excellence passed on by the way its business literature is treated. It can talk to the reader with much the same effect as when two men talk to one another over the fragrant coffee and cigar at luncheon time!

There is, it is true, no artifice whereby a printed book can rise above the ideas of the firm it represents. It can be no better than the man whose brain evolved the firm. A novel based on sensuality can be picked out at once from the decent, healthy books surrounding it. And the literature of an organisation merely striving for effect is totally different from that of one honestly trying to express its best ideas.

One must start, then, with facts—true facts;

digest them thoroughly, express them adequately, and publish them in an attractive way. With truth as his basis, a sound advertising man can be logical in his reasoning, convincing in his statements, and impressive by their decoration with type or design. Type alone is an unfaltering test of the merit of nearly every statement made. Without truth modern typography tends to run away with one, decoration becomes extravagant and soon dwarfs the lettering. Every possible and "impossible" thing is done to bolster up the weakness of the argument, and while the surface impression may be "pretty," it is bound to lack that dignity and strength which is inherent in type dealing with facts that are true. One cannot print a paragraph in 24-point Caslon if the argument will not stand a cool and close analysis. Rather we shall seek to hide in a monotonous solidity of 10-point type. Facts, therefore, being imperative, it often happens that an advertiser, searching for plenty of them, seizes upon trifles and attempts to treat them as through a magnifying glass. This leads to frills, which deceive no one, and, naturally, do no good.

Take, for example, the average catalogue of motor cars. Here, with extremely few exceptions, frilliness predominates. Most of them are sumptuous picture-books, showing views of beauty-spots, but with very little selling strength or information as to what the car will do in the way of hill climbing, petrol and oil consumption; little to tell of its reliability, speed, comfort, and the dozens of details a man must believe before he is led to the point of purchasing.

There are catalogues that leave one chilled because they are so deadly, others that almost suffocate one with "hot air" and "gas." But the book that is correct has its proper "atmosphere," is neither exaggerated nor dull. It deals with hard facts, but does this most engagingly—believing in the forcefulness of simple statements that are true and to the point.

It is not setting too high a standard to say that no catalogue really succeeds that does not find a place on the book-shelves of all to whom it is sent. It should be given much more than a cursory look; by its method of presentation alone

the reader should be made to feel that it would be wasteful to throw it away.

We will pass from catalogues and all printed matter of that nature to the most modern form of business literature—the House Organ. It is here that the little “Newes Sheet” of the seventeenth century seems to have been reincarnated in an industrial dress. These organs summarize the doings of their firms; publish interesting news relating to the industry to which they belong; are not too timid to indulge in a little healthy philosophy; endeavour to be cheerful but at the same time critical: and, above all, to crystallise the ideas and give publicity to the progress of the House they represent. By this excellent method the aims of a firm as well as its commodities are given wide publicity, and a most helpful spirit of *camaraderie* is diffused among a body of men who for much too long have upheld the view that a dull, antagonistic, rather gloomy atmosphere is the only one proper to the business life.

The Selfridge columns in the evening Press are almost a House Organ in this sense of the word. Never has a firm given such publicity to



the aspirations of the modern store. There is, too, a pocket magazine entitled *Impressions* which, written and published by Mr. G. E. Whitehouse, has done splendid work in helping to enliven business minds. But one of the most noteworthy and thoroughgoing House Organs is that edited by "Mr. Proof" and published by Dobson, Molle & Co. It is a little masterpiece. From cover to cover this production shows the most remarkable *verve*, and convinces its readers there is very little this firm does not know on the subject of type. No one can read business literature so modernised as this and not feel the infinite possibilities of such publicity. It Makes Known in a way that is as subtle as it is practical. Reading it one seems to breathe the invigorating air of the broad highways of adventure rather than the stuffy, cloying atmosphere of little office rooms. It is a proud firm that runs a House Organ; one that feels it has something to add to the stature and the status of the business world. And with regard to salesmanship, these publications take the place of letters, leaflets, brochures and other more familiar ways whereby certain

business houses endeavour to reach, not the public, but other firms.

Individuality—that most precious asset—has crept into business with the imaginative use of the printed word. Yet one feels that descriptive writing in relation to salesmanship is still in its most primitive stage. Businesses conducting operations of the most enthralling kind seldom really try to excite that interest in their doings which would captivate the fancy of the crowd. They seem to have the most painful antipathy to any plan that is distinguished, that lifts their printed matter on to any more exalted plane than that of the price-list type. Yet I contend that a famous business, like a famous man or woman, is worthy of a biography, a historical record of its life—its discoveries, its struggles, its growth, its experience of the labour world. The humane and the humorous side of business has, so far, been ignored. But the fact that a first-class advertising agency has writers on its staff to-day capable of combining literature with publicity shows the right tendency—at any rate, points in this direction. Only three years ago Messrs.

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Waring & Gillow spent some hundred of pounds publishing a delightful Story of Furniture in the columns of the London press. Only the advent of the war prevented them from issuing this lively little history of their special form of merchandise in the form of a pocket library for the entertainment of their *clientèle*. A few more of these daring excursions into the history of merchandise or the biography of industries and popular writers will find themselves competing with the work of advertising journalists, issued with due dignity, not by publishers, but by business firms. It is a fascinating proposition, for only by some such method as this will the soul of industry be fully revealed.



PART III

THE PROPHETIC ASPECT



## CHAPTER IX

### THE SCIENTIFIC DISTRIBUTION OF IDEAS IN GENERAL

**I**F we gave to our thought a fraction of the consideration that we give to our physical selves, miracles would at once occur. If we were as scientific in the distribution of ideas as we are in the distribution of commodities, the wailings of idealists would cease.

That is the crux of the argument this book has been written to present. In the first part I tried to show how fundamental was the need for Making Known. How all through history people have endeavoured to announce facts of general importance in some public way. In the second part, I tried to prove what highly organised methods of publicity have done for that proverbially quick-witted section of the community—the business world. How this world has sharpened the tool of advertisement so skilfully that those

who have learnt to handle it in a scientific way can carve efficiency out of confusion, success out of failure, wealth out of waste.

I tried not to be dull; not to deal in too great detail with the technical side of the application of this force to the physical needs of man; merely to show that the use of it requires training; that those who practise advertising have a highly specialised function to perform.

In this third part of the book I want to show in what other still more important ways this keen-edged tool, advertisement, might profitably be used. How infinite are the possibilities of the scientific distribution of thought.

All who have ploughed patiently through the second part of the book must have realized that necessity has guided this force into channels of an extremely practical kind. Necessity is now urging us to go still further. It is when we grow practical with our ideals that they begin to fructify. So long as they swim hazily in the minds of visionary people with great generous souls but little executive ability, not very much is done with them; or what is accomplished is



done so slowly, so wastefully, that the faint-hearted majority "give it up."

Here is another instance of the importance of linking different types of mind in the furtherance of fine schemes. Add the trained qualifications of the advertising man to the visionary's inspiration, the reformer's humanity, the statesman's sense of rulership, the artist's æsthetic taste, and at once the conceptions of all such people are put to practical use.

Let us kill that well-worn phrase with which we so complacently judge all original, far-seeing minds—"He is living ahead of his age." It should be the work of advertising *to attune the age to the best thought of its time*. I dare to say that nothing else can accomplish this fine end. Odd books, odd speeches, odd articles in the Press, are not enough. The bigger the idea the more it needs to be compressed, tabulated, simplified, and engagingly set forth. Verbiage has wrecked hosts of exalted notions; killed the life of thousands of books; withered the faint interest of millions of tired minds. And verbiage is the antithesis of good advertisement.

One of the most fascinating bits of machinery to watch is a pile-driver. It drops its weight in sudden, jerky movements. With each stroke it makes a tremendous noise. The pile is thrust deeper into its bed by dint of a series of irresistible, monotonous concussions. The blows are relentless; each one "makes good."

In just such a manner could advertisement thrust ideas into people's minds. Its strokes would have the same dynamic quality, the same slightly sensational sound. Its forcefulness would be as concentrated, therefore as sure. It would make a vivid, irresistible impression where a long-winded verbal or written announcement would have no effect at all.

There is nothing undignified about such a method of making facts or ideas known. We have seen how honesty and simplicity are vital factors in the presentation of commercial news to-day. A big business institution is as much concerned about its dignity as is any Department of the State. Yet these Departments seem to think that decisiveness is undignified. Parliament must even use the *cliché*—"The answer is

in the negative" where the one lovely word *No* would do. A great writer has said that every ten pages of written history would be better condensed into ten lines. Such condensation is the secret of advertisement.

The bugbear of every publicist, reformer, writer, politician, is the lethargy of the human brain. The dominating passion of all public-spirited men is to educate—arouse. The force which has made the public connoisseurs of merchandise could also make them connoisseurs of thought. It could provoke discussion, and in the limelight of discussion truth is eventually found. Superficial propositions would have to suffer very healthy criticism, for the glare of publicity is relentlessly acute.

This discussion would be invoked in the advertisement columns of the Press; the power of the Press in this respect is still unrecognised. As a news-giver it has reached a high pitch of efficiency. Cables, wireless, special correspondents, the tape-machine, the camera, the motor car, and express trains—all these factors wielded together have made a news-recording instrument

so sensitive as to be almost human. But the educative influence of the Press will always be, to a certain extent, biased, tainted, unreliable. This because it represents the two great divisions of mankind—two intellectually opposite groups, one with a tendency always to conserve, the other wishing ever to renew. The first group is composed of that majority which looks upon tradition as a trust; its outlook ensures stability. The second is continually progressive in its feeling; it represents the moving element—the element of change. War is eternally waged between these two opposing forces, and practically every newspaper stands (in accordance with this natural law) in one or the other camp.

That is quite as it should be, for, as a result, both intellectual tendencies are voiced. They create the swing of pendulum that keeps us balanced and sane.

But this makes it impossible for the editorial columns of the Press to give *the right kind of publicity to all kinds of ideas*. It will usually distort the thought which does not fit in with its point of view. Its advertisement columns, how-

ever, can be bought, and it will be a very unwise journal that refuses, in the future, to sell space for the propagation of ideas. Should it do so it would not only lose a mighty source of revenue, but brand itself as weakly hostile to that free and open discussion which is one of its most important *raisons-d'être*.

It is practically certain that the use of advertising to distribute political ideas would lessen fanaticism as nothing else can do. It would broaden our minds, teach us that there is a modicum of truth in almost every point of view.

If a man has anything really important to say to-day he need not embody his idea in a weakly inoffensive article to be tentatively offered to a *blasé* editor who may or may not decide to print it in small type on a back page! He can be boldly, gloriously offensive if he so choose; that is to say, he can buy a column of space in the Press and gaily present his own idea with all the faith of his own convictions. Political writers, propagandists, charities, philosophers, scientists—any who choose, can publish their pet theories, their appeals and discoveries (at their own ex-

pense), as a business man publishes (at his own expense) intelligence about his merchandise.

This idea opens up the most entrancing possibilities. If put into practice, a flood of fresh, ingenious thought would be presented to the world. Our wits would be sharpened, our viewpoint enlarged, our tolerance commanded to an unprecedented degree. A great deal of paltry, fussy legislation would be made unnecessary, because here we have the means of getting things accomplished by enlightenment in place of coercion. I see all sorts of controversial questions being amicably settled in this way, instead of our blundering angrily into false positions, backed by the weight of an unscrupulously contrived majority of half-educated minds. I see big, responsible associations spending their funds to enhance that prestige without which a public body is shorn of half its strength. When new legislation is suggested that affects their status or their work, they will place their point of view on record in an entertaining, educative way. Such corporate bodies, very often very rich, could work their own reforms. The Stock Exchange could

kill the bucket shop to-morrow if it chose. The Teachers' Association could force the subject of teachers' pay into the forefront of discussion in a week. If the Women's Suffrage Societies had resorted to advertisement as the most constructive method of propaganda known, their cause would never have been tarnished by militant misrule. Whenever the Press has made even partial use of the methods of the advertising man in an attempt to get something done, it has had a big success. One of the best advertising campaigns ever conducted by a newspaper was the booming of the Territorial Force in 1909 by the *Daily Mail*. A chart was kept by the London County Territorial Force Association showing how the regimental "strengths" went up by leaps and bounds while this "boom" was on.

The Press is the most wonderful medium for the distribution of intelligence the world has ever seen. Any announcement or appeal strikingly displayed upon its pages (that is, with a clever manipulation of type, space, wording and, sometimes, illustration) meets the eyes and so reaches the brain of millions of people a day. Why, in

the name of all that is intelligent, do we not put this force to better use? Every organised society has some message to give to mankind. Why not give it in a scientific way? A Government in close touch with the people that it rules would have the most perfect publicity bureaux for the distribution of intelligence relating to its aims. The British Medical Association is felt by the average person to be a mysterious body of experts with the most reactionary beliefs. But if this body chose to publish the rules whereby it preserves the integrity of its profession; if it would only tell the people what surgeons, doctors and bacteriologists are trying to do for their good; if it would come out into the open as the self-constituted guardian of national health, it would be far more powerful, respected, prosperous, and beloved than it is, working in that stealthy, so-called dignified seclusion which every layman dreads.

If the great working-class associations—the Trade Unions—would only spend a little of their wealth telling the public what it is they are trying to do; in what way they intend to use the freedom



and responsibility they sacrifice so much to gain, they could win the confidence of the most generous-minded public in the world.

The success of a strike largely depends upon the measure of public sympathy it breeds. It is a weapon every one dislikes, but perhaps necessary upon occasions. If, when a strike was in contemplation (a strike in which the right was undoubtedly on labour's side), the Union or Federation advertised its grievances in the capitalist Press, it would win its case by "peaceful persuasion" long before the appointed time to "down tools" came. No body of employers would dare to stand out in the face of an enlightened and, therefore, sympathetic public opinion. No Secretary for Foreign Affairs dares to involve his country in war unless public feeling wills it so. It is the mind of the nation—aroused, self-conscious and determined—that casts the die in all great national disputes.

And what the labour federations could achieve by advertising so could the capitalists. An outspoken publication of grievances on either side would force the truth to appear. The whole

ghastly struggle between these two antagonistic groups should be fought out in the advertisement columns of the Press—each side, each Union, each trade, if necessary, advertising its point of view.

There is no room in advertisement for vituperation. One simply states one's own case as concisely as one can. Every fact must be capable of proof. Every point driven home with rapier-like precision.

Two good advertising men acting as barristers, one for each side, could elucidate, perhaps solve (who knows?) this world-wide problem at the cost of a few thousand pounds.

The potentialities of advertising are more vast than any of us understand. Ignorance has been the cause of every trouble since man was evolved. Dispel the various forms of ignorance in a scientific way and the canker is removed. The more diverse man's activities become the greater is the need for some educative force which will help us to develop in the right direction; prevent us getting muddled, avaricious; which will keep our

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vision on the same high level as our inventive powers.

We have that force at hand to-day. We have learnt how to use it. Its worth has been proved by a most important section of the community. The longer a nation continues to be prejudiced against advertisement the greater the disasters the complexity of modern life will breed.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SCIENTIFIC DISTRIBUTION OF STATE POLICY

**K**EEN competition between nations has taught the State the lesson that keen competition between business firms taught the commercial world. When war broke out the State discovered that it had to get into instant touch with (1) the fighting manhood of the nation; (2) skilled workers valuable to our armies in the field, to our auxiliary fleet, to ship-building yards and munition factories at home; (3) the purse-strings of the rich and poor alike.

It found it could not depend alone upon editors and journalists to give publicity to its needs. Their method was too diffused; it bore no official sanction; and, moreover, their announcements would not stand out sufficiently from the mass of general news.

A means had to be used whereby the nation's need for men and money was silently but vividly proclaimed for every one to see and realise, whether they sat at home or went about their business in the busy streets. And there was only one to fit the case. It lay ready at hand, perfected in every detail—and it was advertisement.

Posters suddenly appeared on every hoarding, were emblazoned on the walls of conspicuous buildings, from railway stations to hotels. Patriotic slogans rushed towards one on the front of every cab. Illustrated appeals stared at one from gay shop windows. Full-page announcements appeared in the Press urging men to enlist; skilled mechanics to report themselves at the various Labour Bureaux; men and women to give their money and voluntary labour to their country in the direst need she had ever known. Of Belgium's pitiable desolation one was reminded everywhere—in the streets, outside the churches, as one walked down the interminable passages of the Tube. The one thought held in common by every soldier at the Front was

caught and vividly recorded on great posters for the silent reproach of men still left at home. The dependence of the armies upon the unflagging industry of the munitioneers, dockyard men, and shipbuilders was vividly presented to the minds of working men. And, most important feat of all, by skilful advertising *the idea of sacrifice was robbed of its vague, rhetorical glamour, and narrowed down, pressed home, to every individual in the land.*

Have YOU done this, that and the other thing? That was the master-stroke. That made one think—stirred one's imagination and sympathy sufficiently to make one act instead of talk and criticise.

We are still too close to that great advertising campaign to see its value in the proper light. But all clear-thinking people must have realised by now some of the significance of its cumulative effect.

Some people have asked of the War Loan advertising: "What exactly did it do? We all knew a loan had been announced. Why spend all that money emphasising the fact?" But the

result of these War Loan announcements did just this. In one morning they set all Britain talking about State Finance. People were reminded of the cost of war; made to realise much more profoundly than they had done before what the State expected every citizen to do. We were led from vague thought to definite action. Big companies held Board Meetings; every household discussed the question over its meals. Chairmen talked to their Directors, suggested that, apart from patriotism altogether, the Company's prestige was at stake. With a capital of so many millions, such and such a sum in thousands was the least they could subscribe. The motion was carried unanimously, and a substantial cheque was forwarded to the proper source that day. Mr. Jones talked to Mrs. Jones, and the children's "nest-egg" was lent to the State as the result. The mind of the entire nation was turned by those announcements to the question of finance, the country, and its need for gold.

The worth of advertisement is judged partly by definite results (in the two cases mentioned it raised a voluntary army of millions of men,

and War Loans to date to the tune of hundreds of millions of pounds), and partly by *the general impression left on people's minds*. These appeals exerted a silent, moral pressure impossible for any with a conscience to resist.

Although a certain amount of war advertisement would have been cancelled had we adopted Compulsory Service from the start, still it was used for so many questions other than recruiting that the Government has seen it as a force vitally affecting the efficient conduct of State affairs to-day. For even when the new conditions made it unnecessary for the War Office to *appeal* for men, it still had to keep them *informed*. It is fairly safe to say that wherever misunderstanding and confusion has arisen between civilians and the military authorities it is because the situation or conditions were not made clear through advertising. The Government and War Department have not yet fully realised the potency of this great force. They still depend too much on official intimations sent to editors of papers, who publish them in the usual small type, among other items of news; or upon the



slow, laborious method of leaflets, printed at great cost and distributed by hand or through the post. The time will come when Governments will publish all their news themselves. They will have their own Publicity Bureau, staffed by expert advertising men. All their announcements will appear in proper advertisement guise, probably in special type—theirs exclusively by law—and with other distinguishing signs of officialdom, such as a scarlet border line, the extra colour no longer being beyond the possibilities of Press advertisement.

If, by the agency of the Devil, or the stupidity of Man, there should ever be another European war, the States concerned will have to present not only their case, but the tale of their intentions, endeavours, and victories to neutral countries. Just as a merchant must have the support of a section of the buying community if his business is to prosper, so nations at war must win the sympathy of neutral States—which sympathy forms a moral support of the most strengthening kind. The outcry at the time of the Battle of Jutland concerning the bungled publication of

the British naval news showed that the feelings of the nation on the question of publicity are more sound than those of our officials. The Admiralty, everybody realised, had made a blunder. It was not so much the effect it had upon our *amour propre* that mattered, as its political effect. For some hours it tinged the neutral atmosphere with doubt. That is a situation no nation in arms can afford to ignore. The fact that Britain has not succeeded in wielding the weapon of organised publicity in her own favour has been extremely detrimental to her interests in this war.

Apart from the essential *rightness* of using modern methods for making public the decrees of an unwieldly modern State, there is the question of *economy* to be considered. All over the country police-court machinery is put into its expensive motion every day concerning ridiculous breaches of State regulations. Lighting orders are continually violated. Hundreds of cases have had to be tried of people failing to register themselves within twenty-four hours' time on entering restricted zones. The excuse in almost

every instance is: "I didn't know I had to do this thing." Paltry fines are made in the majority of cases because the magistrate is perfectly assured that the excuse is true. The police are given an immense amount of unnecessary trouble; the Government is put to great expense, simply because it does not make its legislation public in a scientific way. The pasting up of tiny handbills is quite inadequate to-day. Partly because they never meet the eye of the rural population engrossed in its own affairs (while strangers can't possibly know that they exist), partly because they have to compete with a mass of other infinitely more attractively displayed decrees. Hearsay and police-court news are the only *startling* intimations that hundreds of people have ever received of such temporary rules. The advertisement columns of every newspaper in England should be used to drive State regulations home to the imperceptive, unintelligent majority. Official announcements usually presented in the London and Provincial papers, headed by the royal arms, bordered by the royal scarlet, would not only be a much more dignified but far more

economical way of enforcing recognition of laws than the haphazard methods now in use.

These, of course, are the most primitive suggestions as to how the State could make use of advertisement. As an educative force it would be unrivalled, would statesmen "condescend" to collaborate with advertising men. The expenses of the Crown could be greatly minimised, as are the expenses of the business world. The one sphere distributes ideas conducive to law and order; the other distributes merchandise conducive to comfort and health. Both find that construction or production is a fairly simple matter; it is the machinery needed to maintain constructive legislation, or to create a market for a good commodity, that is so complex, so expensive nowadays. Excellent political reforms are sometimes made almost abortive by the expense attached to their administration. The same problem, in theory, was faced by the business world two generations ago. Advertisement solved it because it reduced the disproportionate cost of distribution. All who have worked in Government departments know the enormous staffs that have to be main-

tained, the colossal waste of pens and ink, paper, postage, energy, and time attendant on making the simplest facts known in the old traditional way. But with an up-to-date Publicity Bureau, the Press and Post Office, a modern State could conduct its affairs on really scientific lines. It is at that point when a modern Government has to get into touch with a big, self-absorbed, lethargic and largely disinterested public that its machinery becomes complex and costly to a degree. Its case is analogous to that of the producer who must try to reach the pockets of the greatest number of consumers in the shortest space of time.

And when the question arises that a State or Government should influence the collective mind of those whom it is there to rule—making the community more thrifty or more sanitary in its habits, preparing the ground for a break in custom, or clearing the atmosphere in order to avert a political storm—in such instances, and their name is legion, a Government that advertised could achieve by persuasion infinitely more than the world yet understands. Particularly is this

true of English-speaking countries, where the sense of individual freedom is so strong. How much minor legislation has been broken on the profound schoolroom truism that you can take a horse to the water but you cannot make it drink.

I conceive it possible that advertisement, honourably used, developed along subtle, yet dignified lines, may yet prove the chief factor in the government of the future, which in a great democracy must tend ever to substitute arbitration for force, enlightenment for coercion.

NOTE.—Since this book was written His Majesty's Government has issued several advertisements of a particularly dramatic kind.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE SCIENTIFIC DISTRIBUTION OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

**I**T is for the benefit of the entire nation that the distribution of political ideas should be scientific. This is specially true of a great democracy believing in the party principle. For here we have a battle royal between conflicting points of view, and that one wins whose "platform" is sufficiently sound to stand the widest, keenest discussion invoked by publicity.

Politicians have to deal to-day with a highly intelligent proletariat, so intelligent, in fact, that when Parliament treats it with contempt, refusing to give it the confidence it deserves, it shrugs its shoulders and dismisses party politics as empty tomfoolery—an attitude ruinous to a Government's prestige.

There is a curious arrogance about a system of government that, depending upon the will of

the people, yet more or less ignores their political enlightenment, even at election time. The making-known of a party programme is, at present, left almost entirely to the pens of leader writers in the Press. But leaders are not widely read, as is well known to several editors in touch with the pulse of the public to-day. They are apt to deal with personalities and side issues; they do not make it their business to provide the public with a lucid digest of the programme of the party they elect to serve, so much as to criticise their opponent's beliefs. The journalistic presentation of political ideas would be excellent if it followed their scientific presentation by advertisement. A programme should first be tabulated by an advertising man—the main principles set forth with a full measure of that dramatic sense peculiar to his trained mind. It is then the journalist's business to elaborate this manifesto; to write up its points in greater detail; to charm his readers by his intimate knowledge of historical analogies, of the personalities of those in the political arena, of the temper of the public towards the proposed reforms.



The functions of the advertising man and journalist in politics should be quite distinct. The one should present the skeleton idea in his own inimitable way; the other should elaborate the same idea. The one is publicity-maker *par excellence*, the other a more versatile exponent of his party's faith.

Conceive a General Election, and the Conservative party suddenly resolved to use scientific publicity for the distribution of its aims. It goes to an advertising man with a synopsis of its programme and instructs him to deal with its presentation to the public in the most effective way.

The advertiser studies the synopsis, as a barrister studies the facts of a case, and proceeds to simplify, elucidate its several points; to discover the popular note of appeal. From this he compiles a striking manifesto to occupy a page, half-page, or column in the Press. The questions of type and balance and spacing are turned over to experts for consideration. The matter is edited with meticulous care. But something has got into it—a quality at once dramatic yet hint-

ing at an intimate, personal appeal. And this indefinable atmosphere, added to a technically excellent type-display, compels the attention of the reader's mind.

This manifesto the advertising man would make appear in the columns not only of the Conservative Press, but of the Liberal and Labour Press as well. In this way it would meet the eye of almost the entire population in one day. Newspapers upholding the opposite views would, if they accepted the advertisement, quite likely criticise it as severely as possible in their leaders the same or the following day. Promptly the advertiser would answer these criticisms. They would not be left to float in the political atmosphere and so weaken the Conservative cause.

By what other means can a party so instantly repeat the dose? Facing the unconverted within twenty-four hours with a still stronger reason as to why it adheres so faithfully to its political creed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let me carry the possibilities of political advertisement still further.

When a man tries to get elected as Parliamentary representative of a constituency it is his business to convert the largest number of people to his party's point of view in the quickest possible time. He is unable to do this without printed literature. His voice will only carry a certain distance, and only a certain number of folk will gather round his tub to hear him give the other side a "dressing down." His personal appearance at street corners or in the average available Small Hall attracts only a small percentage of possible voters, and he cannot by this method reach properly the entire constituency. People learn of a candidate's personality, convictions and forcefulness in the editorial pages of the Press, or through the badly printed, badly written leaflets that are showered on their homes.

Political literature seldom has "life." It is hackneyed, often abusive, wordy, lacking in distinction. It lacks the vigour of good oratory; it does not introduce the personal note in a really trenchant way. Moreover, its presentation in the form of poverty-stricken hand bills, such as a cheap travelling circus would use, is not condu-

cive to much attention on the part of already irritated householders.

Publicity has always been a characteristic of political campaigns, and yet *scientific advertising* is not used—save in respect of posters, which are mere reminders that an election is proceeding.

When in 1913 I published a manifesto to the Chief Party Whips offering my services to simplify their propaganda, the comments of the Press showed how startled people were by the idea! Although in an election the need to Make Known reaches a degree of frenzied intensity exclusive to political campaigns, yet the thought of really using the accepted science of Making Known—advertisement—struck people as “remarkable,” “most enterprising,” “so novel and daring as to take one’s breath away.” . . .

Yet in 1915 Mr. Kennedy Jones, standing as an Independent Candidate for Wimbledon, in a bye-election that took place in the midst of the confusion and absorption of war; having only a week in which to introduce himself and his policy to the Borough; and hampered in every

way by lack of speakers, voluntary workers, cars, and all the usual paraphernalia of election-time, lessened his previous opponent's majority by thousands of votes largely because he had the sense to tell all the voters simply and quickly what he believed.

Mr. Kennedy Jones as business man and editor fully understood the value of publicity; and by publishing dignified personal manifestoes in the Press made his aims known to millions of people in a scientific, because arresting, quick and economical way.

This effort was a brave foreshadowing of what the scientific distribution of political ideas can accomplish even under the most difficult conditions. It was the act of a pioneer; and I prophesy that in the next general election advertising men will be allowed to demonstrate the efficiency of scientific advertising still more thoroughly.

The public is sick to death of political vituperation, "party feeling," personal abuse, and tub-thumping methods of appeal. But they will listen to a case presented in a pithy, digni-

fied yet entertaining fashion; to an exposition of facts that is *businesslike*. The merits of a political proposition can be explained quite simply, clearly and convincingly if the publicity that manufacturers find so wonderfully effective is employed. To put the spirit, personality and outlook of the individual into type is the business of the advertising man. Advertising literature, simply because it is studiously simple, never ambiguous, always concise, often dramatic—*makes them think*, startles their mentality. Political parties feel the most acute need for publicity, yet fail to use it in its most modern form. It is as though, with a knowledge of type, we were still to use penmanship for all our literature. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

I heard recently that a well-known peer, whose judgment is known to be sound, gave it as his opinion that there are four great domestic issues on which people must make up their minds. The rest, he said, might “go hang.” They are Ireland, Woman Suffrage, National Service, and Tariff Reform.

Now all these questions could be more quickly

decided if a few weeks of organised publicity were devoted to each cause. Each one can be narrowed down to a great fundamental principle—Nationality, Justice, Civic Responsibility, and Economic Expediency. Were the main points of these issues dragged out into the limelight by advertisement, stripped clean of those inconsequent “jaundiced views,” that tend to obliterate the one and only genuine point at stake, there would not be any uncertainty left in intelligent people’s minds.

These are all old points of controversy; we have talked ourselves into a stupefied condition over each one. The main arguments are shrouded in a maze of misconception. It is for advertisement to pick out the central threads and thrust them conspicuously before men’s eyes.

The Woman’s Suffrage question reached a pitch before the war where temperament, sex, mental, moral and legal emancipation, class distinctions, marital duties, Mrs. Smith’s laziness and Miss Brown’s frivolity, played battledore and shuttlecock over a matter that should only have been considered from the political point of view.

Instead of debating the point whether, under modern conditions, it were just that women be politically enfranchised, whether the great democratic slogan—"Taxation without representation is tyranny"—was to be upheld, we debated whether women could write and paint as well as men, whether they were businesslike; just what they ought to do with their lives; to what extent a dogmatic husband ought to be obeyed—any and every side issue touching prejudice and personal experience rather than the reasonable argument down on the national agenda.

Despite some of the most brilliant and effective propaganda the world has ever seen, the Women's executive never turned to an advertising man, saying: "Here are the political arguments for our enfranchisement; present them to the public as forcefully as you can." They never devoted a solid week to concentrating on the economic factor, for example, which is so unanswerable; as a business man concentrates upon the unanswerable argument regarding his production—its purity, its durability, or its usefulness. When they found the editorial columns of the Press re-



fused to state their point of view, or to give publicity to their campaigns, demonstrations, speeches, trials and meetings, they were up against the common grievance of all pioneers. The Press exists to give the public news about people, facts, and policies with which they are in sympathy. And the Woman's Suffrage party had yet to win the sympathy of that great majority which would have swung the Press wholeheartedly round to their point of view. Their educational campaign should have been augmented by manifestoes skilfully presented by an advertising expert in the Press. In this way a lucid digest of facts would have faced, in one great journal alone, over a million people a day. How long did it take them to talk to that number? How many hundreds of pounds did they spend in printing and distributing odd bits of literature, in publishing those weekly journals meant to circumvent the indifference of the Press? It is curious that women, so intensely practical, did not grasp the significance of *scientific* advertising from the start, but allowed their cause to be conducted finally by the ancient, futile

method of force originated by man. Had they broken fresh ground they would not only have won their fight some years ago, but done it in a manner so fresh, so inspired, that the man-run world would have learnt an important lesson thereby!

Whenever feeling runs high statements become wild, and the point at issue is lost sight of in mere verbosity. Then the edge is rubbed off the idea; it becomes stale, over-familiarised, because the cut-and-thrust quality only belonging to keen, concise argument is gone.

That quality of keenness, that ability to animate, is one of the secrets of advertisement. It should be the business of the advertising man to instil it into every threadbare topic with which politicians are concerned.

In Disraeli's great political novel *Coningsby*, Sidonia, the Jew, is made to say: "The Printing-press is a political element unknown to classic or feudal times. It absorbs in a great degree the duties of the Sovereign, the Priest, the Parliament; it controls, it educates, it discusses. That Public Opinion, when it acts, would ap-

pear in the form of one who has no class interests.”

It is quite an entrancing proposition whether, in the future, this is most likely to be profoundly true of the editorial or advertising columns of the Press.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE SCIENTIFIC DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE

PUBLISHERS know less about Scientific Distribution than any other class of business men. Although their market increases every year (for every Tom, Dick and Harry reads some sort of literature to-day) they still complain that their trade does not pay. The sales of badly written "popular" books pay for the publication of the first-class stuff, which is, as a rule, too thoughtful to be widely read without some kind of "push."

There is no market, they argue, for the better class of book; no *certain* market for the work of any author without a well-known name.

Now once upon a time there was no market for the Carpet-sweeper. But the men who made these things were not nonplussed because of that.

They had a good article for sale; it had certain advantages over the familiar broom, and they were prepared to make those advantages well known. They had, as usual, to *create a market* for their wares, and they succeeded. Why? Because they had faith in their production and backed up their faith in the modern way. Because they felt that if the Public knew as much about the Carpet-sweeper as they knew themselves, the Public would appreciate its design, its workmanship, its hygienic qualities, and its labour-saving character; consequently the Public would buy.

All advertising is partially ineffectual that does not teach. Publishers must learn to teach the Public the special qualities of the wares they are trying to sell.

Scientific Distribution consists in first locating the right quarter for a particular class of goods, and then in educating that section of society up to a proper appreciation of the merits of those goods. A manufacturer of carpet-sweepers does not try to sell them in the slums. He does not even spend much effort in trying to convert own-

ers of homes so rich they can afford to use electric vacuum sweepers of a superior kind. He talks primarily to the owners of middle-class homes—sufficiently particular to hate “a dust”; sufficiently enlightened to appreciate hygienic arguments; sufficiently ill-staffed for the magic words “labour-saving” to make its due appeal. That is their market—fallow ground waiting to be cultivated.

Now publishers seldom proceed on those lines. They deal in the most fascinating of all commodities. They can market in styles to please every class of mind. They are in a position to distribute, to make known, the world’s greatest ideas, the poet’s loveliest notions—and they fail. Such success as they have is gained *in spite of themselves*. Old Father Time is advertising agent for books that are so fine they are bound to live. And the big sales of the Marie Corellis and Hall Caines, the Ethel M. Dells and Mrs. Barclays of fiction are practically automatic. The readers of such books form the *ready-made* market of light literature.

The business world, by clever advertising, has

made the public connoisseurs in the matter of commodities. Its announcements have bred a community of *discriminating* housewives where sauces, breads, &c. are concerned. But publishers, by invariably playing down to the average taste, have had little influence upon the literary connoisseurship of the nation.

I believe I am right in saying that the sales of Joseph Conrad's books have only recently improved. Yet there was a public for such first-class writing long ago. I've never seen his publishers announce any really salient facts about this artist's style and special attributes in a thoroughly arresting form. And I dare swear his books have chiefly been sold through the personal recommendation of enthusiastic readers.

We all know how keen readers go about begging others to tell them the names of good books. If one keeps a list of newly published books, it is borrowed by all one's friends who read. For the advertising that most publishers do is quite inadequate. The mere title of a book attached to the isolated phrase of some reviewer whom one does not know, so does not trust, is not enough.

Progressive business men no longer think that the mere title of their wares engraven on a hideous enamel plaque that offends the eye and insults the reason is any great inducement for the public to buy. Something much more *intimate* is needed. And of all things, books, with their intimate appeal, need the most subtle, sympathetic publicity. They need publicity that enlightens, that provokes discussion, and is, in effect, a personal introduction of the writer to the world. Such a method of announcement would bridge the gulf between the author's intention and the reader's intelligence.

We have seen how commodities are seldom produced in response to a demand; almost always new inventions are received with hostility, and the markets for them have been *organised*. The market for what merchants call *quality* goods is also carefully fostered ground. No scientific business man attempts to sell goods that are above the average in taste, construction, design, or price without advertising them in a way that directs attention to their rare superiority, and appeals



to the more cultivated instincts of all those who read what he has to say.

All this a publisher ignores. He makes no attempt in his paltry advertising to discriminate between popular fiction (goods of well-known brands that sell themselves) and new or better-class work only likely to attract daring or better educated minds. New and delicate ideas need the careful presentation of new and delicate merchandise. It is only the motoring connoisseur who appreciates the real difference between a Rolls-Royce and a Ford. It is not a matter of price or size, but of *quality*. What publisher has ever tried to emphasise the difference in quality between the work of Walter Pater and Ella Wheeler Wilcox, of Joseph Conrad and William le Queux? Or how often is an eager reader's mind prepared for the *wit* and *iconoclasm* of a Samuel Butler or the *profundity* of such a book as "The New Word"? Yet those are the *characteristics* of these brands of literary merchandise, their saleable attributes, their peculiarities. A scientific business man would call

particular attention to these things, and do it in such a way that the facts were assimilated by the general public as well as the literary world. So, in time, an ever-growing proportion of the general public would be sufficiently intrigued to buy.

It is the most regrettable thing that the publishing world is always bewailing the low level of public taste regarding books; yet business men tell one that the public's taste in merchandise improves every year. The plethora of cheap merchandise does not degrade it in the least; that appeals to—yes, and *educates*—the lower strata of society, whose tendency, however, is always to pass on to better things. Every owner-driver of a Ford dreams of being the possessor of a Rolls-Royce—not from “swank,” but because of the acute delight of driving a car with the most delicate, responsive machinery made. Advertising has created this desire. There will always be a young and enormous public for the Ford, but units from this public are buyers in embryo of the finest pattern cars designed. They are only waiting for their opportunity.

Publishers have this great pull over other business men—their first-class wares to-day are seldom more expensive than their second best. All they have to do, therefore, is to create a reading market that is versatile; to advertise the work of poets in such a way that people with poetic sympathies are reached; that of essayists in such a way that well-tried readers buy; and that of novelists who are artists (not only bookmakers) so cleverly that the satiated readers of the second-rate are enticed, in the nick of time, to better things.

Because the very act of reading is an educative thing, the “penny-dreadful” reader of to-day will devour “popular” fiction to-morrow, until, “fed up” with that, he or she will turn to something better—Arnold Bennett’s novels or even Joseph Conrad’s tales. And from that it is but a little step to the epoch-making books of pioneers.

What a market! What a commodity! What a magnificent opportunity for big, creative advertising campaigns!

For the publisher’s heart is ever with the good

stuff. Again and again he will sacrifice profit for the pure delight of publishing an artist's work. His life is one long reconciliation between his commercial instincts and his æsthetic taste. He knows his house to be a treasury for the world's ideas. But what he does not know is that a Distributing Force exists which, if he would only use it in a *scientific* way, would foster their assimilation by the public—yes, the great unlettered, careless, irritating public—to an extent beyond his wildest dreams. There is no word in Part II. of this book that does not bear upon their problem of How to get the Public to Read.

NOTE.—In choosing the authors mentioned in this Section, the writer begs to state that the *publishers* of their books are unknown to him at the moment of writing. No personal reference is, therefore, intended. The choice was made from the works of authors which seemed best to fit the argument.

Since writing this chapter a book has been

advertised from the moment of publication in a really scientific way. It was in no sense "popular reading," yet over 50,000 copies were sold in thirty days.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE SCIENTIFIC DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL PROPAGANDA

**T**HE amount of good energy wasted on the maladroit propagation of ideas is heart-rending. Numbers of reforms are suffocated by the practical inability of enthusiastic theorists. They all go to work in the same hackneyed, ineffectual manner—first, the sparse drawing-room meeting, then the wordy pamphlets distributed (generally to the converted) through the post, with a membership form attached, the filling up of which makes it obligatory that one should pay a guinea to the funds; then more leaflets; further appeals for money, without which the Society can do no more; and perhaps a meeting in a small hall situated in a bye-way, which is attended by a handful of the converted, and those of their friends who

think them mad, but distinctly entertaining. . . . Finally, a vigorous society may achieve a weekly or monthly publication of its own, issued at an exorbitant cost in comparison with its circulation, and slowly and laboriously distributed on the snowball principle—buy two; read one and pass the other on.

Meanwhile, if the idea has spread, it has been so slow as to become distorted by prejudiced, only half-enlightened minds; and the sacrifice and energy of the propagandists is enormously increased because they now have to combat mistaken criticism, as well as promoting what they so earnestly believe to be the truth.

Anyone who has ever tried systematically to spread abroad a new idea knows that this is the interminable, heart-breaking process used.

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A book was written a few years ago on a question of tremendous importance, that converted more than one European monarch, a number of statesmen and publicists, electrified several big financiers on the Continent, and was being debated before the war in a number of the most im-

portant European universities. A new theory having this result is certainly worth general discussion. Yet, I am told, the author himself admitted that only very hardened readers would get beyond the first few pages of his book.

Now suppose the idea expressed was fundamentally constructive (it may be so for all I know), and suppose it had been advertised—that is, made lucid, simple and concise and presented in an attractive manner to the world at large in the columns of the Press. . . .

And another example comes to my mind.

A club was started a few years back of the most idealistic kind. The thought that prompted its formation must have appealed to every person with public spirit and humane sympathies. The club was to have made use of all the various specialised talents so conspicuous in a modern, civilised community. It was to satisfy the craving every decent person feels to “better things.” The executive was composed of clever, energetic, well-known men. Editors gave a considerable amount of publicity to the idea. Members were enthusiastic. The club had unlimited voluntary



assistance at its command. But, like many other such splendid efforts, it collapsed in a short space of time, chiefly, I understand, from lack of funds.

At one of the committee meetings an advertising man told the executive what it should do to achieve a big success. "Advertise," he said. "Tell the public what it is the club is trying to do. Advertise for money, and you'll find the British public will respond."

The motion was *not* carried on a show of hands. The Noes won the day; and a little later on this excellent society was dissolved.

This question of funds lies behind the able presentation of all good ideas. It is the skeleton every propagandist has to face. Money has a spiritual significance for all fine schemes. The most high-flown idealism depends upon it for the fulfilment of its notions. It is futile to ignore it as though it were some low-down tool one only used if driven into a corner. No association of men or women, wedded to activity, no matter what the form, has ever had much moral value before possessing financial strength. The first

thing such a body has to do is to make its aim known, not to a sprinkling of made sympathisers, but to the community at large. It can only do this effectively by advertisement. It then converts a big enough proportion of the public to make sure that, with but the smallest effort on the part of individuals, its coffers will be filled. Of the money that will easily accrue from each of its appeals, a certain proportion must be set aside for future advertising.

When the central depot of Queen Mary's Needlework Guild came to me for advice on this very question of raising funds, I told them that an expenditure of £50 would clear their financial atmosphere, and make their economic position sound. The Depot spent that sum; and the £50 drew forth £600 from the pockets of people only waiting to be told the facts. This tiny outlay placed the Depot out of debt, and enabled it to make and distribute  $1\frac{1}{4}$  million bandages which, under the circumstances, it would have been impossible for the Government to supply. And by continuing to advertise it soon had a reserve fund amounting to thousands of pounds. The cost of

its advertising was  $21\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the largesse it received.

The advertisement crystallised the Depot's urgent need into a single imaginative phrase. "Will you help to bandage a wounded soldier?" were the words that headed our first appeal.

When the idea of service and sympathy as expressed in the inauguration of the "Star and Garter" Hospital for Disabled Heroes was given scientific advertising, the money needed was raised so quickly that everyone was surprised. Yet the cost of getting it was less than 3 per cent.

By scientific advertising the cost of publicity can be reduced by *half* and yet become *twice* as effectual. Such advertising as I have undertaken for charitable funds has never cost more than 5 per cent. and often been as low as 2 per cent. of the returns.

Anyone can spend money on publicity—pour it out in thousands of pounds; but only the trained advertiser knows how to systematise publicity so that it is cheap as well as certain. A member of Parliament can make a speech, but he

cannot achieve the same effect as an experienced orator, who, the moment he gets upon his feet, has the attention of his audience riveted, and, in a few seconds, their minds enthralled. The benefit of training is not to be despised to-day.

There was never an age so deeply imbued with the reformer's spirit as our own. From His Majesty the King, with his model housing schemes, down to the humblest member of society with his or her passionate adherence to some brotherhood, or fellowship, society or club pledged to an ideal, the community never ceases to urge the reshaping of our social life on nobler, more civilised lines. Yet at the back of all this effort there is a most unhappy sense of failure; there is a feeling of abortiveness akin to suffocation in the dark. The odds are so tremendous; the issue is so immense: the need to *make known* is so overwhelming. In the distribution of ideas we fail, as does the inefficient shopkeeper who does not periodically indulge in stock-taking, whereby he knows just where he stands; who never analyses his expense accounts; who knows not how to advertise. Like him we just muddle

along. With first-rate merchandise behind his counters he still cannot make his business a success. As reformers, with first-rate ideas in their minds, seldom see them fructify on a vigorously wholesale scale.

An idea of any value has a universal appeal. Not a hundred persons but millions would be benefited by its distribution. The method that achieves the scientific distribution of commodities could achieve the scientific distribution of ideas. Carefully reasoned, commercial arguments, attractively displayed, rouse the buying public from indifference to attention, and lead them on to an interest sufficiently strong to impel action. *That process of impulsion is of vital urgency in the realm of thought.* Great ideas are usually the children of the brains of men who can think and dream, but not administrate. When the world learns to harness these dreams to the quick active instincts of practical men, the Eldorado of Ideas will be found for the first time. At present their assimilation is left almost entirely to chance. One *may* happen upon the book or article or league that makes a valiant effort to get them

known; or one may not. One *may* have time and opportunity to think about the progress of the world, or, again, this may be denied. With what the commercial world is doing, saying, trying to achieve, we are perfectly familiar. But the association pledged to investigate and inculcate the profit-sharing principle in industry is as silent as the grave. The great mass of employers and employees so vitally concerned know nothing of its experiments or how they work. None of its statistics have been published in the Press in a conspicuous way. Being an industrial *idea* rather than a commercial *fact*, it remains, befogged, mysterious—only half-elucidated.

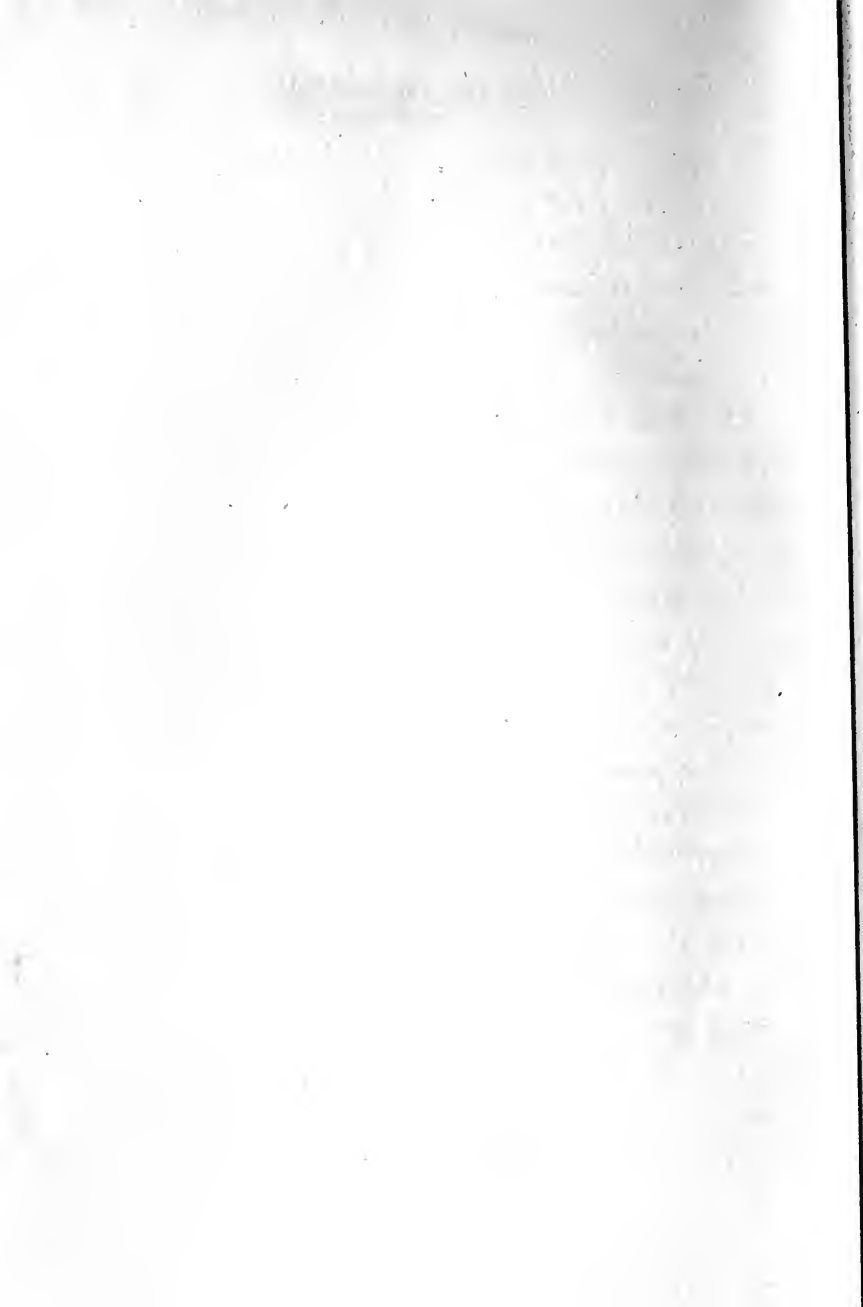
My critics will cry out that this encouragement of the wholesale presentation of ideas in the advertisement columns of the Press would prove an unmitigated bore; that there are quite enough cranks and fanatics “brewing trouble” as it is; and to entice them into print—and big print too!—is simply asking them to make a public exhibition of themselves, which would be irritating to watch.

But the process of advertising has an excellent

effect upon the thing or idea advertised. Its action is that of the thrashing machine. It sorts the wheat from the chaff. Only honest thought, as only honest merchandise, can stand the lime-light of organised publicity for any length of time. The advertising of ideas would breed discussion. An idea that will bear discussion, that emerges from a hot debate more cogent than it was before, is an idea worth making known. And the sooner superficial notions are killed by wide publicity, so much the better for the world. No one need fear that the advertising of ideas will breed a plethora of gimcrack schemes. The initial expense is far too heavy, and the test of their worth too prolonged.

“In Ideas lies the Hope of the World.” Yet we treat their distribution with less respect than we do that of cigarettes or tea. The one is haphazard, the other scientific. For how long is this foolish inertia to last?

That nation will rise to the greatest heights which in the future gives at least as much consideration to the distribution of its Thought as it devotes to its Commodities.







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